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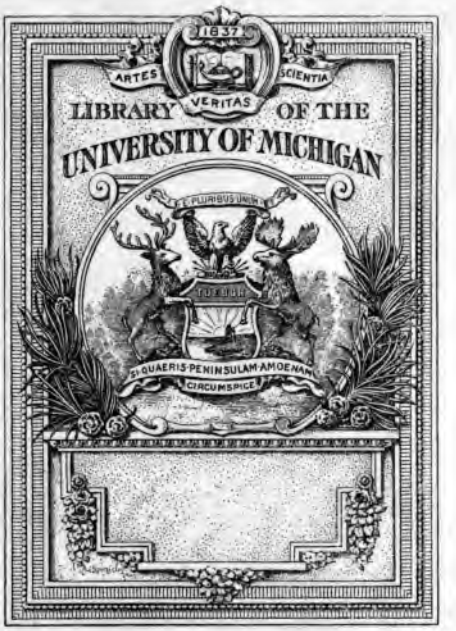
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# Gentlemen of the House of Commons

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VOL. II.

# Gentlemen of the House of Commons

BY

**T. H. S. ESCOTT**

AUTHOR OF

"ENGLAND: ITS PEOPLE, POLITY, AND PURSUITS,"
"PERSONAL FORCES OF THE PERIOD,"
ETC., ETC.

*IN TWO VOLUMES.*

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VOLUME II.

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LONDON
HURST AND BLACKETT, LIMITED
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET
1902

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# Gentlemen of the House of Commons.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE HOUSE FROM KING TO COMMONWEALTH.

Proceedings in the House immediately following the death of Charles—The House of Peers abolished—Arrangements for disposing of the King's body—The King's execution the work of a malignant minority—Appointment of a Council of State—Charles II. proclaimed in Scotland—The House and its critics—Three peers returned as members—Settlements on Charles's children—Monk and the new Government—Lawyers and the House—The Long Parliament turned out by Cromwell—Inner life of the House during this period—The hours of business—Artificial light in the House—Protracted debates in the House—"Naming"—Brow-beating with a glance—Accommodation in the House—Smoking in the House—Seventeenth century speaking—Protection of members—Arbitrary practices of Parliament—Fast days.

THE House had fixed the hour of the King's decapitation between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. No motion for adjournment over the day was made. After the early dinner, the Commons met as usual to transact some important and more trivial business. Letters were ordered to be sent to the local authorities throughout the country, announcing the death of Charles, declaring first that the monarchy had ceased to exist; secondly, that whoever should aid or abet the so-called Prince of Wales in any attempt to wear his father's crown, or in other ways try to revive the kingly office, would incur the pains and penalties of high treason. Several sums were next voted, some by name, to reward adherents to the House

at a trying time; others in the way of secret service money. In the latter was a grim item of £100 to Lord Grey "for the service of the Commonwealth, as he shall think fit." This was known to mean the professional fee of the late King's headsman. A few of the victims of Colonel Pride's purge, by a snatch vote, had been allowed to return to St. Stephen's. The House now voted that none of those, who, like Prynne, had supported the last peace negotiations with Charles, should hereafter be re-admitted.

The art of Petition had been first taught by Hampden and Pym. It was now practised for party purposes by the managers who were supreme at St. Stephen's. From all points of the compass, daily poured in at Westminster petitions, thanking the House for all it had lately done and pledging the signatories to the last to assist it with life and fortune. A few days later, February 6th, 1649, after a short debate taken part in only by second-rate speakers, quite barren of any memorable incidents, the House, by 44 votes to 25, cancelled an earlier resolution in favour of common action with the Peers; then, without dividing on the question, it declared that the House of Lords was "useless, dangerous, and ought to be abolished." To that effect was drafted a bill to be considered first by a committee, presided over by Bulstrode Whitelocke. That body was further to consider how promptly to authorise the recovery of debts from the erewhile Peers of Parliament, who as such had been exempt from arrest or other civil process. The farewell sitting of the doomed Assembly took place February 7th, 1649; it did nothing more than say prayers, dispose of a rectory, and adjourn till next day. It never met again till eleven years later, when Charles II. reigned. Though Bulstrode Whitelocke enjoys the credit of the authorship of the Bill for disestablishing the Peers, he repudiated the step for himself and even voted against it.

The House had now but one further duty to perform to the monarchy it had destroyed. The least discreditable of this series of its debates was that in which, with no outward mark of disrespect, it arranged for the disposal of the King's body. In life, Charles had been refused the attendance of his chaplains and personal friends upon him. These were now permitted to be present at the funeral in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. All the arrangements for this were left to the Duke of Richmond, the only condition being that the expenses were not to exceed £500.

What, it may be asked in conclusion, was the representative value of the Assembly which had raised a military despotism upon the ruins of an autocratic, a short-sighted, a capricious, but neither a detested, nor even an entirely unpopular monarchy? From the figures given in the official or contemporary records,* the normal complement of the House during these transactions seems to have been about three hundred. The divisions taken were few; upon no occasion were more than fifty-three members present; once it was necessary to bring a member out of prison to make up the quorum of forty. Of the distinguished figures at the beginning of the Long Parliament, none of those now survived. Irresistible, therefore, is the inference that the real leaders of this House of Commons meant no more than to oblige the King to rule according to law; the scaffold was the afterthought of a malignant and imperfectly representative minority. Nor were the Crown and the peerage destroyed till the liberties of the popular House had been trampled under foot and most of its members expelled by the army which itself had raised. On February 14th, 1649, the names of the proposed Council of State were read out by the Speaker. The nominations were accepted unanimously; the

* *Parliamentary Hist.*, Vol. III., pp. 1285-1286. The authorities quoted in the footnote.

only division taken was on the proposal to appoint a lord-president of the council. That was lost by 22 to 16 votes. At the same time, the House ordered the replacement of the Royal arms by the arms of England over the Speaker's chair, in all courts of justice and in all public places. Hereafter for the present the council signified its wishes to the House and gave its assent to Bills as the sovereign power of the land. The first duty which it invited the House to perform, was to cancel an ordinance, constituting Lord Warwick lord high admiral of England, and to entrust to itself the entire prerogatives of admiralty commissioners.

By this time the Scotch Parliament had proclaimed Charles II. their King. Amid signs of contemptuous disgust, the House at Westminster received the Northern Parliament's Remonstrance against its recent proceedings. It characterized this document as scandalous and traitorous; it next ordered the commissioners who had presented it to be put under arrest; so they were kept till they were dispatched by sea to their own land. The first measure by which the House indicated the restoration of public peace, was its vote, reducing the interest on money from eight to six per cent. In 1642 the Commons' leaders had in the Grand Remonstrance justified to the nation and to the world their opposition to the King. On March 21st, 1649, they defended before the public opinion of Europe, in a document printed in Latin, French and Dutch, their establishment of a Commonwealth. The paper is a logical and not intemperate retrospect of the misdeeds of Charles; it came from the pen of Vane; it was voted without a division. The House next took in hand the congenial work of chastising the domestic critics of its doings and of its authority. Having voted a land tax for six months to defray the cost of its armies in England and Ireland, it reprimanded the Presbyterian ministers who had presumed to protest against the Independent leaders about Cromwell's

device for gagging the House. It passed at a single sitting a Bill, forbidding ministers of the gospel in preaching or praying, from meddling with affairs of State. The Lord Mayor of London had refused to proclaim the Act abolishing the kingly office; he was summoned to the Bar of the House, April 2nd, 1649, on a charge of contempt; he pleaded conscientious scruples. The Speaker ordered him to withdraw; on his return told him he had forfeited his civic office, had incurred a fine of £2,000, and a month's imprisonment in the Tower. Here he had companions of his confinement in Lilburn, Walwyn, Prince and Overton; the first of these had made the acquaintance of that prison for approving one of Prynne's pamphlets, had owed his release then to Cromwell, who now, in turn, became his jailor. A petition for the release of these prisoners, signed by 10,000 persons, was now presented to the House. It gave the Commons such high offence, that they unanimously resolved the petitioners must be sharply reprehended. Beyond this reprimand, nothing was done, the Commons hoping that this forbearance might cause the offenders and others to see their own errors. The House next had to deal with Remonstrance, more difficult to manage than any it had known since the day on which the London fishwomen interviewed Pym in the lobby. The lady relatives of its last batch of prisoners were not to be put off so easily as the male petitioners. The new petition was less a prayer to the House than a long-drawn-out scolding of it for its recent absurdities and excesses. In reply, the ladies were referred to the answer given to their husbands; they were told to go home and for the future to stick to their housewifery. In the twentieth century, complaints have been made by the heirs to peerages of the hard lot which exiles them from the popular Chamber. The May of 1649 saw three late members of the House of Lords taking their seats in the Chamber which had devoured their own.

The Earl of Pembroke was returned knight of the shire for Berks; Lord Howard of Eskricke was admitted to the Commons as burgess for Carlisle; Lord Salisbury entered the House as member for Lynn. By way of welcoming the new-comers, the House at once placed them upon the same committees in the Lower House, as they had been serving in the Upper at the moment of its extinction. The first business submitted to them in their new home was the settlement of £3,000 a year upon such children of Charles as were left in England—the Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Gloucester. Certain details of the Commonwealth's armorial bearings having been settled and a date fixed for any legal prosecutions arising out of the late war, the House first observed a day of humiliation for entreating the divine blessing on General Cromwell and his army in Ireland, and, after listening to a long sermon, dined with the London corporation in the Grocers' Hall. Nothing now remained but to melt down the regalia of Charles, to demolish his statues, and to divide the spoil between the people's deliverers from the kingly thrall. Bradshaw, who had presided at the trial of Charles, received £1,000 down with an annual allowance of £2,000 for himself and his heirs. Of the Royal parks and palaces, some were kept for the public use; to the City of London a grateful House voted the New Park at Richmond in Surrey. Now, too, came the first mention of a date for the Parliament's dissolution; nothing was then settled; the entire question was left for a committee. The doubtful loyalty to the new régime of the future restorer of the monarchy, Colonel Monk, had already been noticed; he was now censured for military blunders in Ireland, and declared unfit for further employment. From that day, he resolved on the recall of Charles II. That prince had, indeed, already been received in the island of Jersey as the lawful King. Conscious that its time might be short, the House once more

addressed itself to the work of vengeance upon its critics. One of the imprisoned members, Clement Walker, had written a book, *Anarchia Anglicana*; he was arrested on a charge of high treason, and sent to the Tower to wait his trial.

Under Edward III., it has been already seen that the unpopularity of lawyers had expressed itself in their disqualification for Parliament. The enactment, however, was not strictly enforced; it became obsolete as soon as it had been passed. The revolution now accomplished, had been largely the work of lawyers; they therefore became involved in the odium which had overtaken the new governing power. The chief speech in the first Commonwealth Parliament, made by its most learned and moderate member, Whitelocke, was a highly academic vindication of the representatives of law; it was a classical essay rather than a political speech; as such, it dealt rather with the juris-consult element in the Roman senate than with its proved utility in the House of Commons. As had become the case with most discussions at St. Stephen's now, this subject excited no interest. The House itself could think of nothing else than its early dissolution, now clearly inevitable, the composition and work of its successor. Henceforward, it was occupied by the merest trivialities. Anxious it would seem in self-disgust and despair to commit suicide, it recalled General Cromwell from Ireland. The dictator arrived as, soon afterwards, did the fateful 19th of April, 1653. On that day Cromwell held a conference with his chief officers at his lodgings in Whitehall; he sent Colonel Ingoldsby to the House to ascertain what might be doing. The report was that it was considering a measure which would involve another sitting. That was never to take place; Cromwell at once left his friends in his Whitehall room; a party of soldiers met him in Palace Yard, more mustered in the lobby. Thus accompanied, he entered the House as the

official entry says, in a furious manner, bid the Speaker quit the chair, told the members they had sat too long, called them drunkards, unclean persons, scandals to the profession of the gospel. Harrison began to thrust the Speaker from his chair; the Chairman saved him the trouble and walked out. It now remained for two files of musqueteers to make their appearance. "This," mildly remarked Vane, "is not honest." Thereupon Cromwell fell railing upon his old ally, clenching his abuse with the often-quoted words, "The Lord deliver us from Sir Henry Vane." The next day the place was deserted. Somebody had posted upon the Parliament door, "This house to let, unfurnished." As the author of the *coup d'état* had signified, the nation would have lost nothing had the Parliament House been converted into commercial premises many weeks earlier. If the modern House of Commons begins with the Battle of Marston Moor, that event was soon followed by a prolonged season of suspended and entirely profitless animation. The mace, which the House had been at the expense to have re-made and redecorated, had really become the "vain bauble," which Cromwell called it—a symbol of a dead authority—long before the Commons were turned out of doors. The House of three hundred had dwindled down to an average of eighty or a hundred; such was the number present upon that eventful April day. "It is you," said Cromwell, to a prominent City member, "who have forced me to this. I have sought the Lord night and day that he would rather slay me, than put upon me the doing of this work." Alderman Allen's practical observation was, that things had not yet gone so far, but that, if the soldiers were commanded out of the House, and the mace, ordered in, were replaced on the table, affairs might go in their former course. The sincerity of Cromwell's regret was shown by his not only declining the alderman's advice, but by calling upon him for immediate payment of some

£100,000; the sum was claimed as due to the army from Allen as its treasurer. The alderman explained that he had long been prepared to pay the sum; he now offered it in cash. Meanwhile, however, Allen seems to have been seized upon by one of Cromwell's soldiers and to have been marched off to the Tower. After that the lord-general took from the clerk of the House, Scovell, its recent journals, snatched up from the table a dissolution Bill, it had been about to pass. Placing these papers under his cloak and ordering the doors to be locked, he walked off to Whitehall.

Before passing to the motley assemblies which sat in the seats of the Commons during the commonwealth, may be taken a retrospective glance at the inner life, socially and politically, led by the Chamber during the decisively organizing and finally formative period of its stay in the old St. Stephen's Chapel. The general aspect of the Chamber on the opening of the Long Parliament has been already described. The House itself stood exactly upon the same foundations as those to-day supporting the octagonal vestibule of the lobby, St. Stephen's Hall, wherein stand to-day the twelve marble statues of English statesmen. The House itself occupied two-thirds of this length. The remainder was appropriated to the lobby. Members entered this precinct through a door in the wall of Westminster Hall, almost at the exact spot whence to-day is the descent to the crypt. During the seventeenth century, the period now dealt with, the lobby was approached by a short flight of steps. That was the staircase mounted by Charles, when, in 1642, he came to seize the five members. Eleven years later it was ascended by Cromwell's guards to expel the Long Parliament; some twelve months earlier it had admitted Colonel Pride and his band to hurry off to prison Prynne and those who, like him, voted that the King's latest peace offers presented a reasonable ground for negotiations. Above the lobby, in a room between the loftiest ceiling of the

chapel and the low wooden roof of the House itself, were kept its Journals and the other records supplying the material for its history. Of the Chamber's internal arrangements from 1650 onwards a correct and tolerably minute idea can be formed from two contemporary and official representations. After the victory of Dunbar, Parliament ordered a commemorative medal to be struck; the obverse bore the bust of Cromwell, with his conquering battle-cry, "The Lord of Hosts." On the reverse, very clearly executed, was the House of Commons in session. The members are drawn in their cloaks and hats, with their swords by their sides; one member, with head uncovered, stands up to address the House; the Speaker, wearing his official head-gear, is seated in his chair. Another picture of the House, closely resembling this medal in all important details, appears on the new great seal, executed by parliamentary order in 1651. It is seen again, in place of the Royal arms, on the case containing the seal.

Eliot had been the first to arrange, in the modern order, the system of committees, by which the House, even during the Tudor period, had begun to do its real work. These bodies were independent of the Speaker, who, in those days, as generally a nominee and spy of the Crown, was taken for no friend to the privileges of the House. The committees themselves sat in various places, sometimes far outside the limits of Westminster. The Exchequer chamber, the Speaker's chamber, the Lords' chamber, and other un-named apartments, as well as, in its unemployed hours, the House itself, were often allotted to them in the neighbourhood of St. Stephen's. Elsewhere they frequently met at Lincoln's Inn, in the Middle Temple Hall, or in the City.

The Long Parliament and its successors of the commonwealth had inherited from the experience of more than three centuries a considerable code, written or unwritten, of constitutional law, of parliamentary custom, and of more or less

definite procedure laws. Between 1640, when it first met, and 1653, when its master anticipated by a year the date it had fixed for its own dissolution, the House of Commons sat a greater number of hours and debated more contentious matters than had been done in all preceding sessions from the fourteenth century, when, under Edward III., the Commons first sat in a chamber of their own, the Chapter House. The length of the sessions and the complex and disputatious business transacted in them, were only some of the contrasts presented by the seventeenth century House of Commons to its predecessors. For the first time in its existence, absolute freedom of debate was now secured. The standard of intelligence and education among the actual debaters and those who listened to them was high. The outside public, which knew of the discussions at St. Stephen's, not from full and accurate reports in the Press, but from the tolerably trustworthy records of the news-letters read out by the squire to his tenants on the manor-house terrace, or by the innkeeper to his customers at the drinking-bar or in the skittle alley, had begun to be attentive and critical. Under these conditions, traditions hardened into rules, defined and fortified by precedents. Since the day on which Colonel Harrison assisted Speaker Rous from his chair the rules of the House have received many additions; they have been subjected to repeated revision; they have undergone large modification. The principles of order, courtesy, and freedom of discussion have come down to us from the Long Parliament. They were recognized, if not established, before that Assembly met.

The hours of business were, of course, different from those afterwards observed. Under James I. the House met daily at seven in the morning; after an interval for breakfast, it reassembled to read and discuss Bills between eight and ten. In the Long Parliament prayers were read at eight o'clock; even this seemed a degeneration from the epoch which old

members could recall of 6 a.m. sittings; members, late for eight o'clock prayers, were fined a shilling, to go to the poor. In the second year of the Long Parliament, the House, August 7th, 1641, met on a Sunday to protest against the King's journey to Scotland. Before proceeding to business, it recognized the sanctity of the day by attending at St. Margaret's Church to hear prayers and a sermon from a famous preacher, Mr. Calamy. It scarcely ever missed hearing a daily sermon at St. Margaret's at 6 or 7 a.m. Then came compulsory prayers in the House at 8, followed by the hour or less for breakfast. The ordinary sitting ended by noon; four hours were generally regarded as the utmost which, with any profit, could continuously be given to the nation's business. The Speaker had orders to remind the House of the time if the debate were prolonged beyond the stroke of noon. Discussions by artificial light seemed abnormal and even abominable; candles could only be introduced by the special order of the House. The proposal to introduce these sometimes, as during the Grand Remonstrance discussion, provoked debate not less animated and prolonged than modern motions for the adjournment. On June 9th, 1641, it was growing dark, the serjeant-at-arms brought in lights under a mistaken impression that they had been ordered; he was ordered to withdraw; before he could do so, Sir William Widdrington and Mr. Hubert Price violently seized the candlesticks and contemptuously thrust them on the table. That incident ended the sitting. The next day the House censured the two members for their unseemly conduct. Widdrington and Price, notwithstanding their apologies, were imprisoned for a week in the Tower, to whose constable they had to pay a heavy fee before their release. After the Restoration, a like incident cost those who took part in it more than £300. The candle difficulty was only settled in the reign of George I.; then, in 1717, the House made it a standing order, that when after sundown

illuminants were wanted they should be brought in by the serjeant-at-arms without any particular order. The longest debates of the seventeenth century would have seemed protracted, even in those later days when organized obstruction had become a recognized parliamentary weapon. Not to revert to the long wrought-out wrangles over the Remonstrance, the debate upon the state of the nation in 1641 began at noon, only ended at midnight, and was followed till 3 o'clock in the morning by a discussion as to the printing of the declaration of the House. In Cromwell's third Parliament, it will presently be seen that the form of national government was debated upon three consecutive days of eleven hours each, with only an interval of half-an-hour for refreshments at noon. Again, in Richard Cromwell's House, the debate on a Second Chamber occupied nearly a fortnight, without break; that prolongation was chiefly due to an incidental motion to expel Scotch and Irish members. One speaker after another proved unequal to the strain. First one chairman, Chaloner Chute, was carried out of the House ill. A few weeks later he died. Chute's successor, Lisle Lebone, recorder of London, kept the chair for four days; he then was conveyed out of the House on a stretcher; a day or two later his illness ended in the second death, caused by this prolix discussion. Meanwhile, members were dropping off their seats from faintness or leaving the House half-dead with famine. Those who remained were too weak to articulate and too dizzy to bear in mind what the question was. At last one member mustered up courage plaintively to remark to the Speaker, "I perceive the House grows empty, so do our bellies. I pray you let us adjourn for an hour." Even thus the chairman was relentless; the House remained a prisoner for another hour. The high pressure and nervous strain of the Long Parliament did not prevent those who sat in it showing a courteous tolerance for bores that did not tend to

curtail its proceedings. Mr. Serjeant Wyld, in particular, seems to have surpassed all rivals in that line before and after his day. Soon after members assembled, Mr. Wyld began; he resumed immediately after the mid-day adjournment. When he rose a second or third time, some one moved that Mr. Wyld should not be heard again. On the plea that he had before addressed a half-empty House, he was allowed once more to rise.

The epoch of the Long Parliament definitely introduced certain regulations and practices, which are substantially identical with those now making up the sum of the written or unwritten laws of the House. It had been forbidden, as early as 1604, for members to stand about on the floor or gangways of the House. On May 5th, 1641, the Commons' Journals contain the order that if any member shall whisper or stir out of his place to the disturbance of the House, Mr. Speaker is ordered to present his name to the House to proceed against him. This seems to be the first mention of the terrible and mysterious penalty of "naming," whose exact consequences were once supposed to be beyond human ken. The method adopted by members for indicating each other among themselves in debate differed from that now in force; the people's representatives were not then, as to-day, described by the constituencies sending them to St. Stephen's; they were referred to by some local accident, such as the "honourable person" or "the very learned man that spoke near the post" (*i.e.*, one of the pillars supporting the gallery). The Stuart period also witnessed the establishment of the elementary principle of proceedings in the House, that not only does every subject discussed resolve itself into a question, submitted by the Speaker to the House, but that everything said is addressed to the chair. Hence the importance of catching the Speaker's eye; this form began as a precaution against mutual intimidation on the part of members by brow-beating each other with

a stare. In the Long Parliament and those that followed it, were repeated instances of members called to order because their eyes wandered from the chairman to those who sat beside or opposite to him. In the January of 1642 Jesson, member for Coventry, suddenly and passionately started up to oppose a Bill, threatening the interest of his borough, and brought in by Sir H. Mildmay; Mildmay at once complained that Jesson had fixed upon him a menacing and unparliamentary glance. After some discussion the House dismissed the complaint. During the same session, Sir Arthur Hazelrig, moving the adjournment, was called to order because he did not steadily behold the chair. By way of explanation, he at once said, he looked on nobody but the clock, and directed his mental vision on no one but the Speaker.

Not till the existing Houses of Parliament were built by Barry after the burning of St. Stephen's Chapel in 1834, did the House possess the accommodations of a club, a cellar, kitchen, eating-rooms, and a library. Its literary wants were supplied from the shelves of Camden at his house in Old Palace Yard, who, like Sir R. Manley, frequently invited his parliamentary friends to his table. During the eighteenth and the earlier years of the nineteenth century, the chief refreshment house for members was kept by a man named Bellamy; a desire for one of Bellamy's pork pies, and not the reported expression of attachment to his country, was declared to have been the dying utterance of the younger Pitt. An apartment, however, that did duty for a smoking-room, seems in the seventeenth century to have existed within the parliamentary precinct. On January 7th, 1657, took place a spirited debate on the Militia Bill in a full House; two hundred and twenty members were actually present; the tobacconists (*i.e.*, the smokers), who might return at any moment, were thought to amount to at least half as many more; here was a clear presage of the twentieth century

practice of whipping up members for a division from the smoking-room. Further, a seventeenth century order of the House prescribed that no member should presume to smoke tobacco in the gallery, or at the table in committee time. During its Chapter House period, complaints had been made by shire-knights and town burgesses of the inconvenience of the Westminster taverns. In September, 1656, was appointed a committee to consider of the abuses in inns, tobacco-shops, and strong-water houses in and around Westminster; the warmth of the language, implied in the report, might seem to indicate the personal concern of those drafting it in the tavern accommodation investigated.

The seventeenth century speaking of the House of Commons, as it exercised the highest intelligence, also reflects the varied learning, diversified scholarship, and the best culture of the period. A famous American critic, Daniel Webster, thought the speeches, delivered in the Long Parliament House of Commons, reached the highest standard of excellence ever attained at St. Stephen's. Their besetting defect was a tendency to desultoriness and irrelevance; these were faults more common under the Stuarts, than had been the case in Tudor days. Sir Roland Lytton, one of the Hertfordshire members at the beginning of the seventeenth century, some of whose loquacious traits are reflected in the personages of the Caxtonian novels, written by his descendant, sorely tried the patience of the House by his inordinate and persistent garrulity. All the expedients, by which before the closure existing members were silenced or debates cut short, were tried in vain. Mere dulness or honest verbosity has never moved the House to angry extremities. Sir Roland Lytton went far beyond those conventional limits. First came unsuppressed signs of listlessness and inattention; then was tried the overwhelming clamour, which, as in after years John Bright pointed out, is

in certain cases a legitimate form of moral coercion on the part of the Chamber. Still Sir Roland Lytton went on. In the words of the official entry, "It grew to be a question whether he should speak any more"; by an overpowering vote, it was decided he should not; the Speaker informed him that the debate was at an end. Later in the same discussion, the House showed by much hissing and spitting its resentment of irrelevance; it now enacted a fresh rule that Mr. Speaker may stay impertinent speeches. There are other indications of the occasional minuteness and severity of the discipline of St. Stephen's in these days. Sir Thomas Heywood, a member in October, 1656, dutifully applies for, and eventually obtains, leave to go to the country for fourteen days to bring up his lady and family. Many more glimpses of social history are supplied by the parliamentary records. The House decides upon a general thanksgiving. Sir Christopher Park, a London alderman, moves that the day fixed should be early in the week, because on Thursdays and Fridays the carriers come in; the City then was naturally as busy as a country town at market time. Again the diarist, Burton, mentions that the grand committee on religion, not meeting for want of a quorum, "we dined in Fish Street with Captain Atkins and Mr. Booth; cost us nothing, them twenty shillings; coach, three shillings." The words remind one that the first hackney coach in London began to ply under Charles I.

The extravagant pretensions of the Long Parliament to control the property and the person of any with whom it chose to interfere have been from time to time already noticed. These claims were increased rather than diminished by succeeding Houses of Commons. Together with the traditional and instinctive preference of Englishmen for monarchy, they explain the reaction against purely parliamentary Government, displayed by the House of Commons

itself after the Restoration. James I. spoke as a prophet when he saluted, as twelve Kings, the deputation which waited on him at Newmarket. Throughout the whole of the last half of the seventeenth century, members made themselves ridiculous and the House unpopular by their assumption of inviolability. The time, now devoted to questions before work begins, was taken up with hearing complaints, which often made the House resemble a modern police court after a bank holiday. Thus, on one of these occasions, the Speaker, with great seriousness, lays before the House an outrage to Major-General Parker in the open day, and on the Commonwealth's highway. Accompanied by Captain Gladman, the general was going home on Saturday, when a gentleman, being drunk, switched first his horse and him, then fell upon Captain Gladman with great violence. The aggressor was a rude, ranting cavalier, who swore G— d—, since identified as Sir Henry or Mr. Wroth. Wroth was accordingly brought to the Bar by the serjeant-at-arms; he gave a different account of the affair. The Speaker and the House itself saw the squabble to be beneath the dignity of the Chamber. The ill-conducted Royalist escaped with no other penalty than a slight reprimand from the chair.

The House of Lords in earlier days had always claimed and sometimes exercised judiciary rights over their fellow subjects. The House of Commons, as is shown by several instances, already noticed, had, whether by right or not, exercised this power. During the Commonwealth, the House repeatedly resolved itself into a court of justice. A crazy enthusiast, Naylor, gave himself out as a fresh incarnation of the second person in the Trinity. He had thus ridden into Bristol; a half-mad but harmless rabble saluted him as King of Israel and judge of the world. The affair was brought before the House; it was referred to a committee, which, after some weeks' consideration, decided that Naylor should be set

in the pillory for two hours, that he should then be whipped through the streets by the hangman from Westminster to Old Change; that his tongue should be bored through with a hot iron, that he should be branded on the forehead with the letter "B." After this, he was to be taken to Bristol and to undergo exactly the same punishment there; he was then to be returned to the London Bridewell for imprisonment and hard labour until the Parliament should mercifully order his release. Cromwell's intervention secured Naylor some mitigation of these punishments. Cromwell's general, Lambert, protested against the judicial power, now usurped; "the people's liberties," he said, "must not be exposed to an arbitrary authority like this."

In its early years the Long Parliament had, as has been seen, quarrelled with the Westminster divines over certain ecclesiastical technicalities. It showed its orthodoxy in its treatment of Naylor. From the reign of James I. the Chamber showed its piety by the appointment of sessional fast days, by attendance at long services, and by listening to longer sermons. These functions grew in frequency and severity; in 1629 the application to Charles I. to appoint a fast, drew from him, not indeed a refusal, but a disapproval of a constant repetition of these rites. On his point the sense of the House, as expressed by Sir Benjamin Rudyard, was undoubtedly with the King. On these fast-days, at St. Margaret's for the Commons, and at Westminster Abbey for the Lords, three preachers were employed one after the other. The services lasted the whole day. Once at least it was proposed to celebrate the fast in the House itself. "I beseech you," exclaimed Rudyard, "not to make this House a conventicle, and to dishonour God's house by so doing." The protest was successful, but under the dispensation of Cromwell's saints, it became increasingly difficult to distinguish between the proceedings in St. Stephen's Chapel and

at a prayer meeting; the fast services were now regularly held in the House; they frequently lasted from 9 a.m. till 4 in the afternoon. These observances are not likely to be repeated. But apart from the rules or traditions of procedure, inherited from the seventeenth century, there are certain material features, visibly to remind the twentieth century Assembly of its lineal continuity with the Chamber which overthrew the Stuart monarchy, and which a hundred years later was dominated by the eloquence of Pitt and Fox, or by the genius of Burke. The modern smoking-room occupies the exact site of the Cabinet that saw Cromwell sign the death warrant of Charles. The table in the tea-room is that across which thundered the orators and debaters in the time of George III.

# CHAPTER II.

## SEVEN YEARS' VICISSITUDES AT ST. STEPHEN'S (1653-1660).

The Barebones' or Little Parliament—Cromwell's opening speech—Fanatical Christian names—Representative names in the Barebones' Parliament—Francis Rouse chosen Speaker—John Lilburn — Resignation of the Assembly in a body — Cromwell declared Protector—Inauguration ceremony — Differences between Vane and Cromwell—Cromwell's duplicity—Disappointment in the new Government—Cromwell's power over elections—His power of veto—Opponents of Cromwell in his second Parliament—Opening speech of the Protector—Extent of Cromwell's sincerity—His hypocrisy—The Protectorate declared elective—Dissolution of Cromwell's second Parliament—Plot against the Protector's life—Cromwell's third Parliament—Ineffectual attempt to pack it—Royal title offered to Cromwell—Another plot originated by Fifth Monarchy men—Cromwell refuses title of King, but accepts that of Lord Protector —Successes of the Commonwealth forces—Promotions to the Upper House—Death of Cromwell—Richard Cromwell proclaimed Lord Protector—Discontent in the Army—Character of Richard Cromwell—His advisers—First united Parliament—Characteristics of Irish members—Edmund Ludlow—Divisions in Richard Cromwell's Parliament—Bill for consolidating Richard's powers—Mortality and disability amongst the Speakers—Discontent in the Army—The civil factions and their leaders—Reappearance of Speaker Lenthall —The Long Parliament recalled—Richard Cromwell in retirement—Reappearance of well-known names at St. Stephen's—Chief promoters of the Restoration —The Rump expelled—Marten's witticisms—The Convention and restoration of Charles II.

CROMWELL'S expulsion of the Long Parliament in 1653, and his declaration to the world at large of the reason that had impelled him to the step, had been followed by the decision of himself and his military council to call a new Parliament. Then came some differences of opinion as to the composition of the new sovereign body, as nominally it was to be.

Lambert was in favour of its consisting of not more than a dozen persons. Harrison proposed a larger number—that of seventy, a numerical reproduction of the Jewish Sanhedrim. Cromwell dissented from both proposals. Eventually it was decided that the council of officers should make a selection from ratepayers and taxpayers of men suitable to be nominated for the Parliament House. The writs, in Cromwell's name only, were sent out June 6th, 1653. The total of members who thus attended, not at Westminster, but at the Whitehall council chamber, was one hundred and twenty. The opening ceremony consisted of his name being given in by each elected person. They were then admitted into the council-room. Cromwell himself stood by the window opposite to the middle of the table, surrounded by his officers. The speech in which he declared the assembly open took its colour throughout from the biblical phraseology of the time; it was, in effect, a sermon, whose text was the necessity of godliness and all other virtues in the rulers of a nation, and in their councillors; he therefore produced, under his own hand and seal, an instrument whereby he entrusted the supreme authority and government of the Commonwealth to the persons now met. If to-day this address reads like a piece of long-drawn-out hypocrisy, according to the best contemporary evidence it was signally successful; according to his oldest biographer, Carrington, the manner and matter of the pronouncement was so excellent as to leave no doubt upon all hearers of the lord-general believing the Divine spirit to act upon himself; many of the assembly were convinced, too, that this was a fact.

Thus began the Commonwealth convention, known by the name of the Barebones' or Little Parliament, the most ridiculous thing about which was its name. To the fanatics of that period ordinary Christian names did not seem sufficiently sanctified. Even to words of New Testament origin, such as Andrew, James, John, Peter, those of Old Testament occur-

rence, like Habbakuk, Zerubbabel, seemed preferable. The genealogy of the Saviour could be learned from the muster roll of a Cromwellian troop. Frequently an entire Scriptural sentence was bestowed at baptism on the babe. A Sussex jury, struck at this time, contains at least one juror christened "Fight the good fight of faith." Two brothers Barebone, London leather-sellers, were named respectively "Praise God" and "If Christ had not died, you had been damned"; the latter passed familiarly by the appellation of "Damned" Barebone. Most people would not trouble to distinguish between these brethren, and were content to speak of the chamber wherein they sat as the Barebones' Parliament. The assembly, however, contained several names not less respectively representative of their localities than those included in the Long Parliament. Cheshire contributed a Colonel Duckenfield, Cornwall a Bennet, a Langden, and a Rous. There were Carews from Somersetshire, which also sent the famous Bridgwater sailor, Robert Blake. Westmorland was represented by a Howard. There were west country Courtenays. Scotland furnished a Brodie, a Jeffreys, a Lockhart. Yorkshire gave a nobleman, whose peerage is now extinct, Lord Eure. The grave and polished presence of the Speaker was of itself enough to shed a certain dignity over the Barebones' Parliament. Francis Rouse, the courtliest gentleman of the Commonwealth kind, provost of Eton, a sacred poet of no mean order, was unanimously voted to the chair, not for the whole session, but for a month. Through him the assembly requested the lord-general, Cromwell, to take his place as a member; it also nominated Desborough, Harrison, Lambert, and Tomlinson as members, and Scovell as clerk. After a debate as to its title, it resolved, by a majority of nineteen, to be known by the style of a Parliament. Prolonged and severe devotions introduced its proceedings. It dispensed with the formal chaplain; a dozen members prayed and preached after

each other till 4 p.m. Cromwell had by this time taken his seat; he remarked it was a comfortable day. Having voted certain devotional ordinances for the nation, the Parliament appointed committees for the redress of grievances, especially for the relief of taxpayers and for the reduction of tithes.

It has been already seen that in the early days of the Long Parliament Cromwell had secured the release from prison of the future Leveller, John Lilburn. Since then Lilburn successively had become one of Cromwell's colonels, and, as he now was, one of his chief opponents. Under the signature of "Free-born John," he had written several pamphlets, bringing the charge of high treason against Cromwell. His first patron had promptly sent him to the Tower for these; the pamphleteer had no sooner regained his liberty than the Barebones' Parliament voted him to have forfeited his freedom for fresh scandalous libels. "Free-born John" was remitted to his dungeon to await the Parliament's pleasure. The Chamber now bethought itself of legislation. Cromwell, like others of his Long Parliament colleagues, had always taken an interest in law reform; at his suggestion certain measures in that direction were now introduced. Before these could be considered the members, as the protests of some among their members show, were struck with the absurdity of their situation; disgust followed upon weariness. One after another the Parliament-men rose, expressing a wish to resign their power to the source whence it issued; on December 12th, 1653, without any division, the body resolved to surrender back its power to Cromwell. Lest that decision should be repented of, a file of soldiers made their appearance. The Speaker shouldered the mace; in spite of many remonstrances, he led the way to Cromwell's house; he then presented him with the Instrument of resignation. The lord-general, lifting up his eyes with modest surprise, at first refused to receive it. At last, yielding to Lambert's representations of the national

necessity, he signified his compliance with the request. A little later in the same day he consulted with Lambert and others how best he might bear the burden forced upon him. It was settled, after much prayer, that in his duties as Protector of the three nations, he should be assisted by a council of not more than twenty-one, nor less than thirteen. On December 16th came the inauguration ceremony in the Court of Chancery in Westminster Hall. There had been from Whitehall to Westminster a short procession of coaches; in the last of these, dressed in a complete suit of black velvet, with flowing cloak of the same material, came Cromwell himself; in front and on both sides of his carriage were grouped the most distinguished of his supporters and of the army officers. The judges and other great men in the Westminster courts were there too; a rich chair of State, with large cushions and carpets spread before it on the floor, had been prepared to receive the Protector. The commissioners of the great seal stood bare-headed, or bowed reverentially before him. Jessop, a secretary of the council of officers, read aloud the Protector's new style, and the articles, ten in number, for the future government of the Commonwealth.

During the May of 1649, the younger Vane was still an influential member of the House of Commons. The King had just forfeited his life. Vane and the most intelligent among his personal friends did not need to recall from their Oxford days Aristotle's account of the political progress from degenerate democracy to the despotism of one man. "I am," said Vane, "filled with despair, now that the army has become security for the Commonwealth. That man" (pointing to Cromwell), he added to Peters, "would make himself our King." This was said only a few days before the future Protector, in grey worsted stockings and black small clothes, at the instigation of Ingoldsby, had dispersed a remnant of the Long Parliament. Scotland and Ireland had now been con-

quered by the military member for Cambridge town. Cromwell was for giving them parliamentary representation at Westminster. Vane insisted that nothing should be done till consideration had been given to schemes of his own for recasting the whole English electorate, as well as for effecting a complete redistribution of seats. The one point of agreement in later years between Cromwell and Vane had been the Independent method of securing liberty of conscience by granting to each separate congregation ceremonial and doctrinal autonomy. Both men had, indeed, been bent on destroying kingship by that name. Vane, however, always differed from Cromwell in declaring that the Commonwealth could only be sustained by refusal to recognize the presidency not merely of a king, but of any chief magistrate at all. That disagreement had explained, on the memorable occasion already described, Cromwell's angry interjections at Vane, as he stalked up and down the floor of the doomed St. Stephen's. Vane at first never missed a meeting of the Commonwealth committee, which sat on Mondays and Fridays, and at which Ireton, Rich, Scott and Sydney, as well as Cromwell, were also invariably present. So long as Cromwell showed himself content with pressing upon the House of Commons the army scheme of a Chamber of four hundred members, Cromwell and Vane could still work together. The final rupture became inevitable only when Cromwell intrigued against Vane to replace the Commonwealth committee by a junto of his own prætorians. The final issue of the long series of dissimulations and treacheries, of intrigues and counter-intrigues, of plots, of counter-plots, of an assembly, emasculated or overawed, had never been doubtful. Cromwell had begun by cajoling the House of Commons. He ended by betraying it. He used the religious fanatics and the political levellers to overthrow the Commonwealth, reared upon the ruins of monarchy. He brushed the enthusiasts and anarchists out of his path like

vermin, when they seemed to intercept his own progress to supreme power. The moral problems presented by the Protector have been discussed by philosophers and historians. In its relations to the House of Commons, the chief point suggested by the career, which was crowned by the remarkable ceremony of mid-December, 1653, is the extraordinary power in and over the popular Chamber to be exerted by a compact minority, under a capable, unscrupulous leader, superior to his rivals chiefly in the power of knowing his own mind and of persisting in the most direct path to the goal. In 1649 the Independents numbered only one-third of the nation; their parliamentary organization seemed to give them no power beyond their votes. These were the only real enemies the Crown possessed. The remaining two-thirds of the nation, and a proportionate remnant of the House of Commons, consisted of Presbyterian Royalists; these only wished for a Stuart restoration, upon the condition of their being allowed the unrestricted exercise of their own religion. Even Bradshaw, Ludlow, Ireton, Marten, Hazelrig and Sidney, all of them convinced republicans, doubted as to whether the essential advantages of a republic might not, in a country like England, best be gained under a limited monarchy. Hazelrig was an exceedingly ready and effective speaker in the House. Cromwell possessed none of these points in his favour; he had already excited widespread distrust. He was, however, the man of action; he concentrated in himself some distinctive qualities of the nation; he could see the end from the beginning; he bore down all opposition as if he had been merely breaking through a web of gossamer. The ascent of Cromwell to the uncrowned kingship of England illustrates, within the compass of our career, all the most characteristic qualities, the vices not less than the virtues, of the House of Commons.

The tenth article of the protectorate provided for a Parlia-

ment, that is, a House of Commons, composed of county and borough members, numerically proportionate to the constituencies, to sit from time to time. As regarded Scotland and Ireland, if not England itself, the distribution of seats, and the exact figure of the representatives, were to be declared by the Protector and his council at the time of the electoral writs being issued. With respect to the conduct of parliamentary business, all Bills passed by the Chamber were to be presented for approval to Cromwell; he was not, however, to have any veto upon measures. If his assent were not given within three weeks, the Bills were at once to pass in Statutes, provided they contradicted no fundamental principle of the new Constitution. When the instrument of government, occupying six closely-printed pages of the *Parliamentary History*,* had been read by the clerk, Lord Commissioner Lisle presented an oath, engrossed on parchment, of loyalty to the new Constitution, to be taken by Cromwell and his elected successors. The first magistrate, holding the document in his right hand, read it attentively; lifting his eyes with great solemnity and devotion to Heaven, he then subscribed the oath with his name. Three days later the erewhile member for Cambridge, by sound of trumpet in Palace Yard, Westminster, and in the chief town of every county in the land, was proclaimed Protector.

The new Parliament was not to meet till the summer of 1654. When, on July 27, it assembled, it was found to contain the names of many notoriously but ill affected to the Protector, or to the new Constitution. Bulstrode Whitelocke, the moderate leader, had been returned for Buckinghamshire with a staunch Royalist, Robert Pigot, as his colleague. Another member of a famous Royalist family, Richard Grenville, also obtained a Buckinghamshire seat. One of the Russell family, who had sat for Pym's borough of Tavistock,

* *Parly. Hist.*, Vol. III., pp. 1420-1426.

now was returned by Cambridgeshire, where, as in Devon, his family influence prevailed. Cromwell had not always found himself in agreement with the Society of Friends. At least one Cornish borough, and perhaps more, sent to this Parliament members of a well-known Quaker family; John Fox secured the seat for Penrhyn, as many of his relatives have since done. The head of the Hertfordshire Cecils, the Lord Salisbury of the period, sat for that county. One of Cromwell's favourite divines, John Owen, now dean of Christchurch, had been chosen by Oxford University; Bulstrode Whitelocke, together with William Lenthall, sat for Oxford town.* Among the Oxford county members was more than one of the house of Fiennes. Hazelrig reappeared as member for Newcastle-on-Tyne. One of the Adullamites of 1866, Edward Horsman, Mr. Disraeli's "superior person," sat in several Houses of the Victorian age. His ancestor of the same name sat in the second Cromwellian convention. There were, too, a Corbet from Shropshire, a Shelley from Lewes, a Lucy, and a Sir Richard Temple from Warwickshire, another Lucy from Westmorland, a Popham, and a Sir Ashley Cooper from Wiltshire. Cromwell's right-hand man in his various acts of parliamentary ejection, Major-General Sir Hardress Waller, had been returned for an Irish constituency; so had that soldier's colleague, Colonel Ingoldsby.

The discourse with which the Protector opened the session, was another of his characteristic lay sermons; in opening it, the preacher did not choose any single text; it was thickly sprinkled throughout with scriptural extracts, prophetic of the troublous times in store for Christ's elect, and declaratory of the duties of zeal for goodness and of self-distrust. At

* According to the *Parly. Hist.*, Vol. III., pp. 1428 & 1430, Bulstrode Whitelocke must have sat part of the time for Buckinghamshire and a part for Oxford City.

what point with the Protector sincerity ended and hypocrisy began cannot be known. Some men, who would scarcely be credited with the delicate perceptions and the finer feelings supposed to make up the character of gentlemen, possess in place of these qualities a certain artistic or historic sense, enabling them to play the part tolerably well. So may it have been with Cromwell; if he did not actually experience, he had a consummate skill in simulating the feeling of humility. The language and very sensations of that virtue were all at his command. He was invariably clad in a complete panoply of moral sentiment. This was the armour which defied the profane glance of the public; in this armour of spiritual modesty, no chink or flaw could be found. Some great statesmen have been marked by a talent for self-deception. Cromwell was possessed by a never-failing genius for humility. That gift enabled him, not merely to use the peculiar language of the virtue, but in great measure to realise its feelings. Luther, no doubt, was endowed with the same gift. But it inspired Cromwell with a boldness, indistinguishable from license and absurdity, such as Luther did not know. At the very moment that he and his Ironsides were trampling down every class in the country and by brute force goading his colleagues and the country into distasteful excesses, he spoke of himself and his followers as poor, weak saints, if not sheep yet lambs, poor people of God, poor despised things, poor instruments, weak hands and so forth. "O, the divine mercy," he exclaims, "to the whole society of saints." When he stood conqueror on the fields of Dunbar and Worcester; when his work at Drogheda had pacified Ireland; when he had outraged popular feeling, not so much by the fact as by the manner of his dismissal of Parliament, he was still a mere looker on, a poor, unworthy creature, a servant of all work to everyone; he would sooner keep a flock of sheep than hold the protectorate. Yet this Cromwell

not merely moulded the revolt against the King; the rebellion was incarnate in himself. He not only made the war; he created each fresh foot of political ground on which he took his stand. Long after the nation was sick of resistance, disbelieved the gravity of the wrongs it alleged against the King; when, after a few years of bloodshed and disorder, it desired nothing more than peace with Charles and steady-going church services; when it loathed the heroic puritan far more than it had even dreaded the Crown despot, Cromwell, by his sword's point, kept the nation from turning back, and, as it wished above all things to go on in the old way once more, forced Parliament and the country into consistency. Power, he knew sooner or later, must centralize itself in some one. Providence, he believed, had predetermined that that some one should be himself. All this time, of course, Cromwell posed as, above all things, the member of Parliament; he was a civilian, not a soldier. The House and the nation were dimly at first conscious of the jealousy, natural in a revolutionary struggle on the part of the civil body towards the military. That feeling was disarmed by the self-disparaging constitutional platitudes and deprecatory pietisms of the humble member for Cambridge town.

Great part of Cromwell's speech to his second Parliament was a detailed recapitulation of these points in his career. "I called not myself to this place. Of that God is witness. I should be false to the trust that God has placed in me if I allowed any but God and the people to take me from my present place." The keynote of the political portions of the discourse was liberty, religious even more than political. Freedom for every man to worship God according to his conscience. That is a fundamental for us and for the generations to come. It was the desire for freedom that had sent our poor and afflicted people from here, where they lived comfortably, into a vast howling wilderness in New England,

where they have for liberty's sake stripped themselves of all comfort and enjoyment. At the close of his speech, those members who had left the House for a few minutes, witnessed a practical illustration of the Protector's ideas of the liberty about which he had discoursed so finely. When about to re-enter the Chamber, these delegates of the Sovereign people found a military guard placed to prevent their return till they had signed an engagement of fidelity to Cromwell. The Speaker and about one hundred and thirty members, having subscribed this pledge, were re-admitted to the House. After an adjournment of some days, during which a weeding process took place, the approved members resumed their seats; they were allowed to discuss the question whether the office of Protector should be hereditary. Lambert argued the affirmative in a long speech. At the close of a debate which had occupied a fortnight of the October of 1654, by a majority of two hundred as against sixty the House pronounced for an elected protectorate. That formed the first great offence given to Cromwell by his second Parliament. It was repeated several times during the early part of the next year. The Protector was at no pains to conceal his weariness and intolerance of the non-compliant Assembly. At last, January 22nd, 1655, Cromwell sent for the members to meet him in the Painted Chamber. When he first called his Parliament together, it was, he said, the hopefullest day that ever his eyes saw. After a long preface, Cromwell found his duty to God and to his country compelled him to declare his second Parliament dissolved.

A plot against the Protector's life was now contrived in different parts of the country. The conspiracy was easily detected and defeated. Its authors were of course declared to be Royalists. It produced, however, so opportune a reaction in the first magistrate's favour, that the whole affair might well have been arranged by Cromwell's warmest

partizans. There followed large seizures of Royalists which filled all the prisons in England. The time had now come for the Protector to increase and improve the military organization of his Government. Followed the mapping-out of the country into military districts under the Cromwellian major-generals. This step was not to supersede the necessity of a new Parliament. As a fact, it provided the Protector with the means of so manipulating the constituencies, as to pack the Assembly with his nominees. Notwithstanding these precautions, several of the Protector's opponents, both in the Barebones' or Little, as well as in his second, Parliament, were returned by large majorities. In the September of 1656 the House met. Once more the Protector's soldiers were stationed at the door to exclude all applicants for admission not bearing the first magistrate's personal certificate; they were soon lodged in such prisons as happened not to be full already. From this confinement they addressed to the Speaker a protest against the treatment they had received. Among the signatures, the most distinguished were those of Cromwell's former friend and colleague, Hazelrig, of Ashley Cooper, of Richard Grenville, of Edward Harley, a descendant of the politician of that name, who in the Long Parliament had so actively represented the Commons in their negotiations with the Lords and with the King.

Among the members allowed to take their seats was a highly-esteemed and wealthy representative of the City, Alderman Pack. Pack had been lord mayor in 1655, had been knighted by Cromwell for opening a public subscription to relieve the poor Protestants in Piedmont, had been charged with malversation of public funds. Cromwell, it was said, had promised to secure his acquittal in consideration of his making the proposal, presently to be stated. Trade of all kinds suffered grievously from the unsettled state of the nation. Scarcely a day passed without some fresh house of London

commerce finding itself bankrupt. The commercial relations of the country abroad was suffering seriously. Of the natural dissatisfaction and alarm thus caused, Alderman Pack made himself the spokesman. He lost little time in coming to the point. There was, he contended, but one remedy for the national evils. Cromwell must at last bear the Royal responsibility to which he had shown himself equal, and consent to be, in name as well as in reality, a King. The House, it could at once be seen, was practically unanimous in favour of Pack's suggestion. In an Assembly of some two hundred were only fifty-four dissentients from the proposal. The vote having been taken, a day was set apart for imploring Divine guidance in this important business. The "Humble Petition and Advice" was the name given to this proposal. Speaker Rouse was ordered to present it in the presence of all the members to the Protector at the Whitehall banquetting house, March 31st, 1657. The Speaker's address upon the occasion set forth the historic arguments from the time of Saul downwards in favour of monarchy; it wound up with a demonstration, that of all possible kings, Cromwell would make the greatest and the best. The Protector's reply might have been anticipated—he would seek Divine counsel, and in due course communicate his decision. By April 9th, the Protector found himself in a position only to declare his doubts and scruples to a committee of the House. Meanwhile a fresh plot against the first magistrate caused Pack and his friends to redouble their efforts; the new movement came from the fifth monarchy men, headed by Danvers, Rich and other officers. These enthusiasts called themselves "the remnant who had waited for the blessed appearance and hope." The banner, under which they hoped to march to victory, was brought in to be examined by the Commons; here it was elicited that the conspirators aimed at entrusting supreme legislative power to Christ, whose day was said to have come;

under that Divine Sovereign, the plotters were to act as princes; their first object was to erect a Sanhedrim or a new council to be chosen by all certified saints now upon earth. Meanwhile, Cromwell was still considering his answer to Alderman Pack's request. On May 8th the army officers petitioned the House against the Royal proposal. The same day Bulstrode Whitelocke, one of the lords commissioners, desired the Parliament to meet the Protector at Whitehall. There was the reply given to the proposal. "I cannot undertake the government with the title of King; and that is my answer to this great and weighty business." That refusal was never retracted. The shrewd Whitelocke and the observant Thurlow, both of whom knew as much of Cromwell as was ever revealed to human eye, believed the Protector not only to be satisfied of his fitness for the acceptance of Pack's proposal, but of his having actually decided to accept it, when the military petition, signed by sundry colonels, majors, and captains made him pause. The very crown seems to have been made. On the motion, not now of Pack, but of some one whom Pack put up, without any serious debate, but, after a division of seventy-seven to forty-five, the House now resolved to bestow on Cromwell the title of Lord Protector. That style was accepted. When assuming it, Cromwell pledged himself to call Parliaments, consisting of two Houses, once in three years or oftener. Cromwell was also to name his successor, and a revenue of £1,300,000 for national purposes being provided, to promise not to resort to irregular or arbitrary means of taxation.

The sea and land forces of the Commonwealth were now in the full tide of their victories. On May 28th, 1657, Secretary Thurlow acquainted the House with the destruction, at Santa Cruz, of a Spanish fleet by a member of that House, the great Admiral, who sat for Bridgwater. As a token of national gratitude, Blake was voted the gift of a jewel, costing £500.

Before the prorogation came the ceremony of investing Cromwell with his ennobled title. This was a more imposing function than the instalment of the plain Protector. Sir Oliver Flemyng, master of the ceremonies, personally invited all foreign ministers and State officials to be present in Westminster Hall on June 26th, 1657. On that day, under the great window of the upper end, was laid a table; upon it, as the pictures of the period show, was spread a purple robe, a Bible, a sceptre, and a sword of State. These symbols of rule presently were presented by Speaker Sir Thomas Widdrington to Cromwell, who had come to Westminster by water, landing at Parliament Stairs. In the religious service which followed the Rev. Manton invoked a blessing on the Lord-Protector, on his forces by land and sea. After this came the salutation by his highness of the ambassadors and other great officials. Cromwell's train was borne by noblemen of high degree; his manner was marked by a grave urbanity and unassuming dignity, which favourably impressed foreign, as well as English, observers. To the new House of Lords several of Cromwell's opponents, as well as friends, were promoted from the Commons. Such were the Earl of Manchester, the Earl of Warwick, Sir Charles Wolseley, Bulstrode Whitelocke, Hazelrig, Oliver St. John, Colonel Ingoldsby, Sir Christopher Pack, the London alderman who would have made the Protector the King, Richard Hampden, a descendant of John Hampden, and ex-Speaker Lenthall.

Notwithstanding the compliment paid them by the elevation of so many of their number, the Commons were not quick to recognize the authority of the other House. The friction does not seem to have been very serious. No business of importance or interest passed in either Chamber. In the following February, 1658, came another dissolution. A dissolution more decisive than that was, however, at hand; on the 12th of August the Lord-Protector fell sick at Hampton Court. On

the 3rd of September, the anniversary of Dunbar and Worcester, he died.

Cromwell was supposed to have made a will in Fleetwood's favour. That soldier, however, promptly renounced all claim or pretention to the succession. Richard Cromwell, born in 1626, was Oliver's third son. The deaths of his two elder brothers made him his father's natural successor. General Monk, then a firm friend of the Cromwell family, and of much authority in Scotland, where Stuart sympathies still lingered, lost no time in proclaiming Richard Cromwell the new Lord-Protector. The chiefs of the army had acquiesced in Oliver's promotion by themselves to a place above them all. They had become estranged from him by his readiness to accept the kingly title; they had reluctantly conferred upon him the Lord-Protectorship. The cabals against him begun before the breath had left his body. They did not, indeed, trouble themselves to oppose Richard's succession; they held daily meetings with a view of undermining Richard's power. Richard's brother, Henry Cromwell, was governor in Ireland. To him Lord Fauconberg, a secret Royalist, wrote, that "though as yet not a dog wags his tongue against your brother, there were secret murmurings in the army as if Richard were not general of it as your father was." Oliver's views as to the son who actually succeeded him do not appear to be certainly known. Hallam* declares the only evidence of Richard's appointment by his father was an expression of doubtful authenticity in a Privy Council proclamation. Richard himself inherited none of the characteristic qualities of Oliver. His abilities were below, rather than above, the average. He had no more ambition than he had fitness for his stirring career. The worst which could be said of him personally was, that his private virtues in the then state of the nation were so many public vices. On the other hand, the colourlessness of Richard

* Vol. II., p. 361.

Cromwell recommended him to many shrewd politicians of the period who would not have supported him had he displayed strong and positive qualities. The Presbyterians had seen in Oliver's removal the finger of God; they did not withhold from a son, once removed from the crime of the King's death, the loyalty which they had denied to the father, the arch-regicide himself. Richard Cromwell's chief enemies, indeed, were those members of the House of Commons who had been most closely associated with Oliver. The vain and greedy Lambert, the crafty, plausible, but systematically dishonest Thurloe, brought to the service of Richard a knowledge of the methods of Oliver; they brought also great unpopularity and distrust, acquired under their earlier chief. Bulstrode Whitelocke and Lord Broghill were the two most sensible councillors of the new Protector. Hazelrig, indeed, proffered his offices, but by this time that old survivor of the Long Parliament clique had shown himself in his true colours, both to friends and foes, as churlish, shifty, and self-seeking, wearing his habitual ill-temper as a veil to hide his constitutional perfidy. The ablest adviser possessed by Richard was undoubtedly Pierrepoint, whose House of Commons' speeches glow with a common sense, only less bright than the fire of genius, whose parliamentary and popular reputation for wisdom justly exceeded that of any of his contemporaries. To this man, more than to anyone else, Richard Cromwell owed, if not his succession, still his ability to acquit himself decently and to retain his place. Upon Richard's succession money had become a pressing need. On January 27th, 1659, writs were issued in the ordinary manner; not, however, to exactly the same constituencies as had sent representatives to St. Stephen's in the days of Oliver. The electoral model, formed by the great Protector, provided for members from Ireland and Scotland as well as England sitting at Westminster. It was, therefore, the first united Parliament for the whole kingdom which ever

assembled. Its composition, therefore, came nearer than any of its predecessors to those assemblies which have been known since at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Pitt carried the Irish union, and members from the other side of St. George's Channel first took their seats at St. Stephen's. In Victorian days has often been heard the suggestion that a Bill, exclusively of Irish or Scotch interest, should be referred to a committee of Scotch or Irish members. Such a committee was anticipated by the Cromwellian Chamber of 1656. Came before the House a Bill for assigning to Henry Whalley and Erasmus Smith, two Protestant colonists, then known as "adventurers," the Irish estates of two delinquent Peers, Lords Ardes and Glainboise. The principle of the measure was accepted; it was, therefore, committeed. Bamfield, an English member, who had travelled in Ireland, knew the country well, and entirely disapproved of Cromwell's coercion acts, moved that all who served for Ireland should be on the committee. A few weeks later was introduced a Bill to confirm General Monk in the possession of certain estates which had formerly belonged to the Duke of Hamilton in Scotland; it was now resolved that all Scotch members should be on this committee. Sir Gilbert Pickering, the Cromwellian predecessor of the Hanoverian old Tory, protested against this distinction of members. "Scotch or Irish," he said, "as they sit in Parliament they are but mere Englishmen;" in that opinion he was warmly supported by Mr. Ashe, a Wiltshire member of Hibernian extraction. While these lines are being written, the financial relations of the three kingdoms remain a controversial topic; the discussion dates from the Cromwellian period. Between 1654 and 1656 an assessment of £60,000 a month for the support of the army and navy was laid upon all English land. A little later arose the question of the rate for Scotland and Ireland. The representatives of both countries resorted to every expedient for securing an abatement, and

when that was demurred to, for prolonging the debate. Both countries were declared to be reduced to the lowest point of misery and poverty—quite unable to bear any further taxation. Eventually a temporary tax was imposed—£8,000 for three months. The Irish members of those days, in point of ingenuity, pertinacity, and eloquence, did not fall short of their successors. Major Morgan, in exceedingly vivacious harangues, declared the consequences of this fresh burden would be the refusal of Irish patriots to take any part in the State business of their Saxon oppressors. Colonel Sydenham denounced these remarks as an attempt to terrorise the House. Colonel Sankey, another Celt, supported Morgan. An Anglo-Irish scuffle was only prevented by the Speaker's threat to call in the serjeant-at-arms.

Two reasons weighed with a political manager of 1659 in replacing the Cromwellian constituencies by a partial return to the older electorates. In the larger political areas, chosen by the first Protector; in the counties and in the great towns, the official influence was comparatively slight. The small boroughs were easily manageable. Edward Ludlow had been during the civil war a student in the Temple; he had served under Fairfax and Waller in the Parliamentary army; he had been one of the judges who condemned Charles; he now inclined towards the malcontents and moderates who recognized a leader in Whitelocke. He sat for Hindon under Richard Cromwell; before entering the House he had resolved to agitate for the Long Parliament's restoration; in the first session under the new Protector he poured contempt upon the official scheme for packing the House with the Government's friends. Another motive which may have induced the abandonment of the Cromwellian divisions was a desire to take every possible step in the direction of the deserted land-marks. A Royalist restoration had already become merely a matter of time. In Richard Cromwell's

House of Commons Ludlow was one of several old Commonwealth members. These were more than balanced by the courtiers, as the Cromwellians had now become to be called. The Presbyterian members were also numerically in fair strength; they were divided into two sections—one of cavalier, the other of democratic, predilections. The avowed republicans were less than fifty. The neutrals or moderates included many Royalists, and mustered between one hundred and a hundred and fifty. The rest of the House, in which, generally, three hundred sat, was made up of more than a hundred and fifty Cromwellian lawyers and soldiers. The Protector's opening speech was clear, sensible, and comprehensive. The tribute paid to his father was free from all exaggeration; the incidental account of his death was restrained and pathetic. Organized opposition, chiefly inspired by Lord Fauconberg, to the existing dispensation, disclosed itself upon the introduction of the Bill for consolidating the power of the young Protector. The object of the measure was to recognize Richard as undoubted Lord-Protector and chief magistrate; it was only carried in a mutilated form, with the loss of the strengthening epithet. In the Petition and Advice to Oliver, first offering kingship and then making him Lord-Protector, the veto upon legislation in Parliament was purposely left uncertain; it now became the subject of acrimonious debate. So also did the relations between the Upper and the Lower House. By one hundred and seventy-seven to one hundred and thirteen, the Commons agreed to transact business with the Lords; they also resolved that such Peers as had been generally faithful to Parliament, even when omitted by Cromwell, should not be disqualified from sitting in the second Chamber. In both Houses now reappeared some of Oliver's Scotch and Irish members. The great feature in the inner life of St. Stephen's during this unsettled season was the rising rate of mortality or disability of the Speakers.

Chaloner Chute, who had followed the temporary chairmanship of Lenthall, first found himself too ill to attend; the exceptional honour of a deputation to his sick chamber was voted. The House, having satisfied itself of the facts, chose Sir Lislebone Long as Chute's substitute. Within a few days Chute and Long both died; Long was said to have been half-dead when appointed. The office now went to a private member, a popular country squire, Thomas Banfield, who survived the selection some time. Speaker Banfield's first official duty was to read to the House a petition to the army, every sentence of which breathed bitter discontent, not merely at the definite evils of long arrears of pay overdue, but at the incapacity and factious jealousies of their officers. But for the military malcontents, lent by Desborough, Fleetwood, and Sydenham, Richard Cromwell might have weathered the storm of this session, and terms might have been arranged between the army and the Parliament. In later days, one is accustomed to associate soldiers, officers, and men with a zeal for reactionary Toryism. In the seventeenth century the spirit of Cromwell still animated infantry and cavalry to such a degree, that both were equally intolerant of the Court party, now in the ascendant. That faction consisted of Presbyterians and lawyers, the latter of daily increasing ambition and strength, led by Maynard. It was, in fact, a struggle between the men of the sword and the gentlemen of the long robe. A long discussion took place. Maynard spoke for nearly six hours with extraordinary energy and a concentrated bitterness against the militarists, that was visible in his face long after his voice was silent. The result of this debate was a resolution that, during the parliamentary session, the army should hold no general council or meeting without the consent of both Houses. This decision had the effect which might, from the first, have been foreseen. Desborough, Fleetwood, Lambert, and some other militarists in the House, resolved upon a new

stroke. Richard Cromwell was distracted between two civil factions—the Presbyterians, with no special leader at St. Stephen's, and the lawyers, headed by Maynard. This serjeant-at-law was now only in the middle of his long career; in 1641 he had conducted the proceedings against Strafford; in 1689 he was to head a deputation of the Bar to William III. Said that prince, "You must surely, Mr. Serjeant, have outlived all the lawyers of your time." "Yes, Sire," was the answer, "and without your Majesty I might also have outlived the laws." Lambert possessed two or three friends in the House who might have helped him in his consuming ambition to repeat the course of his old master, Oliver. Only the envenomed vigilance of Hazelrig, the political stormy petrel of the hour, frustrated some such step as this. Between these desperate factions stood the perplexed phantom of the so-called Lord-Protector. The closing scene, alike of Richard Cromwell and his House of Commons, was at hand. On April 22nd, 1659, he had received a committee from the House, had granted the request to pay its chaplain £50 for the great duty of saying prayers daily since they met. Having done this, he proceeded to play the game of his military masters; they had decided for a dissolution. Richard therefore issued writs for choosing a new House. The first idea of the army had been to obtain the money they wanted without the machinery of Parliament. Hazelrig was now pretending to co-operate with Lambert; his, perhaps, may have been this suggestion, with the secret purpose of ruining his ally. At any rate, the scheme was no sooner conceived than dropped.

A new actor in the drama of disingenuousness appears on the stage in the person of the famous Speaker of the Long Parliament, suddenly revived from obscurity. William Lenthall, who, having been born in 1591, had now only reached his sixty-eighth year, was a gentleman of distinguished descent, and of more than a lawyer's ordinary power

of adapting himself to the wants, and of imbibing the inspiration of his age; he traced back his lineage without a flaw to Sir Roland Lenthall, of Hampton Court, Hereford, an Agincourt hero in 1415. The tempests of the Long Parliament had no effect upon his adamantine constitution. Other Speakers, or their substitutes, worn out by their work, as has been seen, fell sick and died, or were heard of no more. Lenthall alone remained, justifying the one piece of wit recorded of the morose Hazelrig. This man can be no other than Theseus; "sedet aeternumque sedebit." These two gentlemen, together with Lambert, were discussing the political situation after a mid-day dinner in a Westminster tavern, on exactly the same site as that to-day occupied by Lucas's dining rooms. To this company, according to the contemporary account, appeared Secretary Thurloe, with the incredible story that, under his influence, Richard was holding out against a dissolution. No words, but very significant glances, passed between Lambert, Lenthall, and Hazelrig; since 1653 Lenthall had held high legal office; had at the same time represented at St. Stephen's Gloucester city and Oxford county successively; he had also sat in Oliver's second Chamber; feeling still fit for work, he was at this moment on the look-out for some new opening; he cared little whether, in the interest of the Cromwellian or the Stuart dynasty; he stood higher than did any other civilian in the estimation of the army. Within an hour of the dinner in the Westminster tavern, all was settled. Lambert could answer for the army, that its wish would be gratified by the recall of the Long Parliament. Hazelrig, ever the slave of conscience, felt no doubt that Lenthall would obey the call of duty, and once more take the Chair. Before the month was out, the army officers invited the members of the Long Parliament, who had sat till April 20th, 1653, to return to the exercise and discharge of their trust. Richard Cromwell had before this not un-

favourably received overtures from the Royalists in England, perhaps directly from Charles himself in his Continental exile. Everyone knew that Oliver's son would gladly retire into private life on terms, which would give him a competence and provide adequately for his family. Solicitude for his father's memory had always been the most creditable feature in Richard's character; his estate in the Home counties was burdened by debts, contracted on his father's account; it sufficed for his simple wants; his life of blameless and passionless tranquillity did not close till late in the reign of Queen Anne; only once after his abdication did he reappear in London; he then visited the House of Lords; a gentleman in the Strangers' Gallery asked the Hertfordshire squire whether he had before or recently beheld that Chamber. "Not, sir," was the reply, with a gesture towards the Throne, "since I sat in that chair."

The military invitation was accepted. During the first week of May, all that was left of the Long Parliament, rather less than a hundred members, met at Westminster. The nickname by which this Assembly has always been known seems to have been invented long before this time; the handful of members left after Cromwell had made his successive clearances were called the "Rump" in the ballads of that period; the name even seems to have been applied to the minority which had sentenced Charles I. to death. Of the four score and ten, constituting the Assembly, less than fifty at first formed the House; a quorum was only formed by driblets. Since the King's execution, numerically as well as politically, the House had become insignificant. Upon no occasion does it seem to have mustered more than a hundred; on nearly every occasion it failed to rise much above fifty. With some exceptions, the most famous names of the Long Parliament do not reappear in the Rump. Speaker Lenthall welcomes a fresh arrival in the person of his son John. Henry Marten,

once, as Pym called him, the droll and the delight of the House, is there; his jokes, however, no longer raise a laugh; the younger republicans see in him only a remnant of antiquity; they cough him down when he rises to speak. There is, of course, Hazelrig, now Sir Arthur. There are the Cromwellian colonels, and one or two other soldiers, Major-General Sir Jeremy Sankey, Major-General Packer, the sturdy Skippon, who keeps clear of intrigue, but prays night and morning that Heaven will soon and safely bring King Charles home. There are several noblemen, called, of course, as Commoners, by their family names. Such are Mr. Cecil, Earl of Salisbury; Mr. Herbert, Earl of Pembroke; Mr. Nevil, heir to the earldom of Abergavenny. The only opening ceremony seems to have been a series of prayers and sermons at St. Margaret's Church. The first business discussed was the appointment of a committee of safety. Its chief members are Fleetwood, now a nobleman, Hazelrig, Ludlow, Sydenham, and Vane. On May 9th, Major Salway has it in command from the committee of safety, on which he sits, to report that Charles Stuart intends a speedy invasion, and that he is supported by an army some eighteen hundred strong. A ludicrous unreality covers the deliberations of the House for strengthening the national defences against a Royal invasion. Not only in the House itself, so far as it represented the nation, but in the country and in every corner of the empire, where Oliver had reproduced the glories of Elizabeth by ruling with his strong hand, were the name of a commonwealth and the associations of a republic loathed and execrated. Not a day passed in the House without petitions coming up to it for release from the victims of Cromwell's tyranny and hate. One of these was a member of the House and of the ancient Whig family of Portman; fifty gentlemen of Portman's station had been sold for slaves in the Barbadoes. The fanatics and democrats who made up the Independent faction under Major-

General Brown were now for the most part secret, when they were not open, Royalists. The last speech in the House of Commons delivered by Vane was a glowing and eloquent denunciation of the polity under which these abominations had been possible, and might occur again. Vane himself shirked sitting on the safety committee to which he had been nominated. Ludlow never sat on it at all. Meanwhile the Rota Club, presided over by the author of *Oceana*, devised daily new constitutions for a maimed Parliament and a kingless and destructed people; Harrington, now best known from his authorship of the political romance just named, had represented Rutlandshire both in the Royalist and Republican interest; in 1659 he favoured vote by ballot and frequent changes in the executive, but held the true foundation of political power to be territorial, and some form of monarchy to be best suited to England. The cavaliers in the House formed a group, interesting rather than influential. Sir William Waller, Sir Ashley Cooper, Popham of Somerset, Townshend of Norfolk, the progenitor of Sir Robert Walpole's rival, were the chief parliamentary promoters of the Restoration; most, if not all, of these were Presbyterians, and still remained theoretically republicans. A man's foes are those of his own household. The most active promoter of the change was Richard Cromwell's brother-in-law, Lord Fauconberg, who intrigued with the Generals Monk and Lockhart to secure the adhesion of Richard for cash payment, and of his brother Henry for a peerage and a pension. On May 14th, 1659, Oliver's Great Seal was brought into the House, which immediately voted that it should be broken in solemn silence; the next order was to put up for auction, for the good of the Commonwealth and for the payment of the arrears due to the soldiers, Somerset House, which, latterly, had been Oliver's palace.

Now came a series of what not untruthfully may be called

burlesque imitations of Oliver's summary treatment of the Long Parliament. Desborough and Lambert could not make themselves joint protectors. They could still count upon some of the soldiers. The army had restored the Long Parliament. It now proceeded to expel it; under Morley and Moss the regiments mustered in Palace Yard. Speaker Lenthall had already told the House that spiritual concerns, and especially the frequent reception of the Sacrament, would prevent his being much in the chair; he was now stopped by the soldiers on his way to St. Stephen's; the general body of the members were once more collectively imprisoned. Again the House had, in effect, ceased to exist. At this moment another general, Monk, with the army that had tranquillised Scotland, was known to be marching south. It was believed he would go straight to the Parliament House and restore order to an anarchic land. During the daytime, the whole country rung with curses upon the Rump Parliament. At night it glowed with bonfires, at which, to the music of bells, were roasted rumps of beef and mutton. At Oxford, Shelden, warden of All Souls, a Cromwellite and a Rumper, had his windows broken by the hindquarters of a sheep thrown against them.

The House was only kept together by, and certainly met to hear nothing else than, the witticisms of Marten, who desires to rank as the seventeenth century Sheridan of St. Stephen's; no subject was too grave for the jests of this chartered libertine of debate; he had already shown himself more than a match at repartee for Oliver; Marten had moved several votes of thanks to General Cromwell, but when Alderman Pack had been put up to offer the Protector the Crown, Marten protested that, if they were to be governed by a single person, the late King would have done as well as any—the objection being, not to the man, but to the office; shortly before this Cromwell had playfully alluded to Marten as Sir Henry. "I thank your Majesty," said Marten,

rising and bowing, "I always knew I should be knighted when you were King." Between his facetiæ Marten dozed a good deal; he once roused himself in time to hear a motion that the sleepers should be turned out. "I rise, Mr. Speaker," he said, "to move an amendment, that those who cause my slumbers should go out first." The very day that Monk was hourly expected in the Chamber, Marten was turning that general's southwards march into fun. A Puritan member, moving the expulsion of all unsanctified persons, Marten added that the fools should go too, when, he said, there would be a thin House. At this moment the clatter of swords was heard in the lobby. The Cromwellian officer, who had long been won over to the Royalist cause, obeying, as he said, the House's invitation to receive its thanks, appeared at the Bar. Acknowledging the honour received, he still went on to declare that the national welfare required a new and freely-elected Chamber. Before the month of February, 1660, was out, the House showed its appreciation of the general's words by constituting Monk commander-in-chief, and for appointing a new Council of State. On March 16th came the formal and final dissolution of the Long Parliament. On the 25th of April following, the Convention Parliament, then sitting, voted the Restoration of Charles II.

# CHAPTER III.

## THE HOUSE IN SACK-CLOTH.

General George Monk—Bulstrode Whitelocke advises Fleetwood to declare for a free Parliament—Familiar names in the Convention House—The Harleys—Andrew Marvell—Lenthall's remorse for part taken in execution of Charles—Degeneration of the Speakership—Baiting the Chair—Former Speakers who have maintained the dignity of the chamber—The Chairmanship under the Stuarts—Sir Harbottle Grimston, Speaker of the Convention House—Part played by Denzil Holles in the Restoration—Cromwell and Holles—a contrast—Character of Charles II.—Servility of the House—Act of Pardon and Indemnity—Attainders against Cromwell, Bradshaw, Blake, and Ireton—Landing of Charles II.—Exceptions to the Act of Indemnity—John Milton's position—Religious discussions in the House—Vane and Lambert excepted from the Act of Oblivion—The bodies of Blake, Cromwell, and Pride exhumed and burnt.

THE new military master of the House of Commons, George Monk, presently to prove the immediate instruments of the Restoration, since the death of Blake, as his ship just entered Plymouth Harbour on her return voyage from America, held the foremost place amongst the men of action in the Cromwellian party; like Blake, he had won fame as a fighter equally by sea and land; like Blake, too, and, in this respect, Pym, he was one of the West Anglians that recruited the political movement of the seventeenth century, which in general and rightly is associated so closely with the Eastern counties; the son of a North Devon knight, he had begun by serving the Protestant cause in the Dutch army; with sympathies often monarchical, he had been induced, as the easiest means

of escaping from his imprisonment in the Tower, to take the Covenant; he had fought under Cromwell at Dunbar in 1650; three years later, he had won two naval victories over Van Tromp. The appointment as Governor of Scotland, bestowed on him by Cromwell, gave him the opportunity of achieving distinction as a successful general. When on New Year's Day, 1660, he crossed the border with 6,000 men; when, five weeks later, he entered London and lifted up his voice for a free Parliament in the Rump House of Commons, or when he actually summoned Charles II. from Breda, Monk was only following the fashion of a vexed and universally intriguing epoch. It had become a race between the Cromwellian generals and politicians who should first reach the goal by the road Monk had chosen. Monk surpassed his competitors not only in skilful dissimulation, but in shrewd sense and in a perfect command and composure of temper, for which perhaps history affords no parallel, save John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough. Monk's great crime in the eyes of his contemporaries was to have acted while his competitors counselled; he therefore succeeded where they failed. Whether Fleetwood would crush Lambert or Lambert would be able to make himself master of Fleetwood was the question still being discussed by politicians a few days before Monk strode up the central aisle of St. Stephen's to the Speaker's chair. Whether a Cromwell or a Stuart reigned was personally immaterial to Monk; he had already done Richard Cromwell a good turn; if the Protector had shown a capacity for being anything else but a puppet pulled by others, Monk might have continued to stand by him. If, in the April of 1659 Monk had not taken the initiative with respect to the exiled dynasty and the parliamentary Rump, it is quite certain he would have found himself anticipated by his professional rivals. Bulstrode Whitelocke had ever been a slack republican; he was now a scarcely concealed

Royalist. He was also keenly alive to the expediency of standing well with the militarists; when he saw the final collapse of the Protectorate and had reasons to suspect the designs of Monk, believing for the moment another general's star might be in the ascendant, Whitelocke held daily conferences with Fleetwood; the civilian's advice to the soldier was to seize the Tower of London, walk boldly into the House, declare for a free Parliament, and meanwhile send a trusted person to Breda to offer to bring back the King on terms to be agreed upon. If Fleetwood did not take this course, General Monk, Whitelocke assured him, most certainly would.

If these men are to be called conspirators, never did plotters so ostentatiously concert their proceedings in a house of glass, in full view at every point of the public eye. Marten was only one of many members of the House, who, during several weeks past, jestingly had predicted what was coming from beyond the Tweed. "Monk," he said, "was like a person sent to make a suit of clothes, who brings with him a budget full of house-breaker's tools; if it should be remarked that such things scarcely fit the work required of him, he would reply 'never mind, it will serve your turn well enough.'" That seems to have been the most representative utterance heard in the House on the eve of Monk's *coup d'état*. Marten's closing days were as overcast as often happens in the case of men of careless and mercurial temperament. Like Vane, Marten was accounted a regicide on the Restoration. The sincere and blameless enthusiast atoned for his crimes on the scaffold. Marten's libertine career kept his head on his shoulders till the last. "One cannot," characteristically remarked the restored King, "send such a scamp as Harry to the block."

In the Convention House of Commons, sitting at the time of the return of Charles II. and responsible for his restoration,

many of the familiar names recur. An ancestor of the Berkshire baronet, who distinguished himself in the Balaclava charge, also a Sir Roger Palmer, sits for New Windsor. A son of Speaker Lenthall, Sir John, is member for Abingdon. Cornish constituencies send men with well-known county names—a Moyle for Lostwithiel, a Boscawen for Truro, a Robarts for Bodmin, several belonging to the family of Killigrew, more than one Buller. Another Cornish borough, Boseiney, better known by its modern name Boscastle, in one of its members, Charles Pym, perpetuates the patronymic of a great leader of the House. John Eliot's old borough chooses one of his descendants bearing exactly the same famous name. Cumberland has as its members Lord Charles Howard and Sir Wilfred Lawson. Denzil Holles once more sits for Dorchester. A Bramston represented Essex when the members sat in the Chapter House; one of the same family had his place at St. Stephen's in the House, which enabled the King once more to come by his own. Kent chose for its two knights of the shire an ancestor of the present Lord Hothfield, Sir John Tufton, and, as a matter of course, Sir Edward Dering. Stafford contributed Sir Charles Wolesley. Lichfield, a Michael Biddulph. For Guildford town there even then sat an Onslow. Sussex had its Pelhams, Scarborough its Legard. Westmorland provided its knights from the houses of Lowther and Wharton. Among the border county members were descendants of the Robert Harley, who had taken at the beginning of the Stuart or even at the end of the Tudor period so active a part in advancing the interests of puritan Protestantism, whether by removing from churches the faintest symbols of Popery or in bringing family influence to secure cordial co-operation of the Lords and the Commons on all religious issues. Till the period of Queen Anne, the moral and political qualities of this notable House of Commons family descended through

generations in an unbroken line from father to son. The Harleys, as a rule, married very judiciously; they had thus connected themselves with several of the leading families in the north, not less than in the south, of England. Denzil Holles, if by temper at no time an uncompromising enemy of the Court, became in his later years as strong an opponent of Cromwell as Vane himself. Eventually he formed one of the deputation sent to Charles at Breda. The successive phases of his politics were always thought to reflect the affinity with cavalier families which came to him in virtue of his kinship with the house of Harley—closely related, as by marriage it had been, with the Yorkshire Wentworths. The Harley memoirs, printed by the Camden Society, show the sons of the House to have derived the ideas in Church and State, distinguishing them in the seventeenth century, from the ladies of their name; most of these, as Clarendon says, having been bred in Holland, were wanting in due reverence for the Church of England.*

Upon no member of the 1660 House of Commons, did his associates look with such interest as upon a borough representative whose picturesque appearance distinguished him from the crowd of lawyers, or squires, that chiefly composed the Assembly. The senior member for Kingston-on-Hull, with his fair complexion, light curling hair, and a manner of singular gentleness, alternately fastidious and urbane, had for his colleague a thick-set gentleman of swarthier countenance and of darker hair, than was often seen in that Yorkshire district, largely peopled by the Danish stock; he wore his hair even longer than was the fashion for those days; he evidently gave greater attention to its dressing than gentlemen of his political views generally bestowed on such a trifle. This was Andrew Marvell, first returned for his present constituency in Richard Cromwell's House, but known

* *Letters of the Lady Brilliana Harley*, Camden Society. Introduction XIII.

to all classes of his countrymen as a poet, at least ten years earlier; in that year he had spoken to his constituents about, and had written verses on, "Great Charles's Death." Some of the lines in his ode upon Cromwell's return from Ireland celebrated the King's death:

> "He nothing common did, or mean,
> Upon that memorable scene," etc., etc.

The noble words were as popular in their author's life-time as they have since become classical. The closing words of the poem had rung through every corner of the land. Repeated in every English household, they formed a literary influence, scarcely less instrumental in producing reaction against republicanism than the Royalist prose epic, known as Clarendon's "History of the Rebellion." The son of a Yorkshire clergyman, the poet had been educated at the Hull Grammar School under his father, learning from him the liberal art of scanning. When, at Trinity, Cambridge, he had fallen under Jesuit influence; genuine sympathy with republicanism or puritanism he never possessed; his family had many political connections; to these, rather than to his own genius, did Marvell owe his return to the House. Thus, too, had Geoffrey Chaucer, in the fourteenth century, been indebted to his City acquaintanceship for his choice as knight of the shire for Kent. Fairfax had introduced Marvell to Milton, who, in turn, secured him an introduction to official life under Cromwell, but a Cromwellian, the Yorkshire member never was. Like other poets, later as well as earlier, he hated anarchy; he saw the need of a strong hand; he detested the way in which strength was used; his despair of inducing the Stuart king to keep faith alone, associated him with the Commonwealth leaders. No member of the House in his day was in closer touch with his constituents or, by his prose pamphlets, helped their political education so much.

General Monk, in his declaration before the House for a free Parliament, had also insisted on measures that would improve the condition of the universities. He had himself worn the gown before he took up the sword, or had even sat in the Commons. His alma mater, Cambridge, now recognised his services electing him her member. Monk, however, had already been returned, together with Sir John Northcote, for Devon; he chose to represent his native county in the Convention House of Commons.

Speaker Lenthall's connection with the House ceased when the last had been seen of the Rump. In the Long Parliament he had been a power. On his return, in 1659, after a period of judicial service, he probably did not consider the prospects of representative government to be very bright. He preferred, as has been seen, the practices of piety to the duties of the Chair. Pecuniary disappointment also may have had something to do with a long-growing indifference to his position. The House, he complained, had ordered that he should have £5 on certain parliamentary fees. The edict was soon cancelled. Later the House voted him, in consideration of his losses, £6,000. Of that sum he only received less than half; of the daily £5, due as salary to the Chair, nothing, he declared, was ever paid him. Lenthall's remorse for his opposition to Charles I., if sincere, lacked dignity in its expression. "My trouble," he said, in his last illness, "is disobedience to the pater patriæ. I confess, with Saul, that I held his clothes while they murdered him, but I never consented to his death. That I proposed the bloody question for trying the King is without excuse. But I hoped that the very putting the question would have cleared him, because I believe they were four to one against it."

During the excited days of the moribund Commonwealth, the Speakership had, indeed, greatly degenerated from its ancient dignity. The spirit of feverish rebellion against all

constituted authority expressed itself at St. Stephen's in marked inattention or in actual rudeness to the Chair. Infected by the moral contagion of the hour, the Speaker began to lose self-respect. In a division on a motion to nullify certain marriages, the numbers being equal, sixty-nine on both sides, the Speaker was called upon to give a decisive vote; he stood up and said, amid contemptuous laughter, "I am a Yea, or, if you like, a No." Sufferance rather than authority was now becoming the tribe-badge of Speakers. To bait the Chairman had become a recognised pastime. Members purposely spoke low before a disorderly audience; the chairman was then roughly ordered exactly to report what had been said. A look of perplexity passed over his face; the Master of the Rolls, who had a seat in the House near the chair, came to his rescue. Mr. Speaker was not bound to report inaudible utterances. The Speaker meekly observed he was glad of that information; for gentlemen persisted in talking at the top of their voices; they could not hear one another; they expected the Chair to tell them what was said. The demagogue of the period, Sir Arthur Hazelrig, entered into this pastime heartily; he defied the law, commanding a member, on his legs, to address the Chair. "I am not," said Hazelrig, "bound to look you in the face, like children, to see if you have a penny in your pocket." A series of violent scenes followed; one member called the place a cock-pit; another a bear-garden. The intimidated president of the Assembly, Speaker Chute or Lisle, was laughed down, when he cried "Order, order." Hazelrig seems to have thought it presumption for the chairman to interfere at all. "The Chair," he said, "behaves himself like a Busby, and, however grandly, takes too much on him."

Such disrespect to the Chair is only what was to have been expected. Not only at this season were the bands of all authority unloosed, but the idea of the Chair's inviolability

was comparatively new. Under the Stuarts the Speaker was still a Court official, paid from the King's civil list. As a servant of the House, and independent of the Crown, the first occupant of the chair is to be found during the Lancastrian period in the person of Sir Arnold Savage, mentioned at his pages; Savage's ancient Cheshire and Kentish lineage appreciably helped to enforce his authority. After him, in 1406, Speaker Sir John Tiptoft may rank as the chief organizer of the mediæval House. A few years later, Speaker Sir Thomas Chaucer (the poet's son), carried on his predecessor's work by passing an ordinance forbidding any persons, members or not, from informing the King about what passed in the Commons' debates. Still, even now, the chairman at St. Stephen's sometimes filled the office of the Sovereign's head butler. Throughout this period the Crown's constant endeavour was to use the Speaker to create jealousy between the body over which he presided and the clergy. Not till a little later did the member who filled the chair become a disciplinarian of the Chamber; in 1414 Speaker Sir Thomas Hungerford, K.G., high sheriff and knight of the shire for Wilts, a member of a great military family, seemed, according to tradition, for the records of the year are lost, to have managed the House of Commons like a regiment. The Rozels, descended from Scandinavian jarls, came to England with William the Conqueror. In 1423, in the person of Sir John Russell, they gave to the Commons in the Chapter House a Speaker, who founded a political family, as well as made the Chair a power. Mr. Serjeant Yelverton, under Henry VIII., maintained the rights and dignity of the House, when Wolsey, with his men at arms, entered with a peremptory demand of a subsidy for the King; under Elizabeth, Yelverton set the fashion of the modest deprecation, by candidates for the Chair, of the honour, bestowed in their election. Next to Sir Thomas More, the parliamentarian and Churchman, whose personality seems like a prophecy, in-

carnate of W. E. Gladstone, the greatest of the Tudor Speakers were Sir Thomas Audley; he not only presided over Wolsey's impeachment by the House; knowing Henry VIII. better than he knew himself, Audley also helped on the measures by which the King secured the severance of the English from the Roman Church. In 1562, an ancestor of the Arthur Onslow of the Georgian era, Richard Onslow, who dared say what he liked to Queen Elizabeth, was introduced to the Chair by Sir Francis Knollys and Sir Ambrose Cave; when there, "he made of the mace a sceptre." Ten years later, Speaker Sir John Popham so ordered the deliberations of the House as to smooth Elizabeth's way in giving the order for Mary Stuart's execution.

Throughout the Stuart period the Chair continued a thorny throne. Under James I., July 16th, 1610, the Speaker complained that Sir E. Herbert took not off his hat to him, but put out his tongue and popped his mouth with his finger in scorn; also that another member, in a loud and violent manner, and contrary to the usage of Parliament, standing near the chair, cried "Baw!" in the Speaker's ear, to the terror and affrightment of the chairman himself and all present. Under Charles I. signs grew that the Speaker was about to become a real power in the realm. During the Short Parliament, in the spring of 1640, Speaker Glanville, when the House was in committee, and the chairman consequently free to take part in the debate, attacked the judges' decision in favour of ship-money, as well as the tax itself, that was the keystone in the arch of the Royal policy.

The Convention House of Commons which voted the Restoration was, as has been seen, fairly representative of all divisions of national feeling. Its Speaker also embodied in himself many among the tendencies and prejudices, most distinctive of the age, as well as of the Assembly. Sir Harbottle Grimston was a knight who belonged to a Presbyterian family

of the most Orthodox kind. He had sat in the Long Parliament, but had never been heart and soul with its leaders; he may be described as, by conviction, a moderate Royalist, a shrewd man, intelligently persuaded that a return to Stuart kingship offered the best chance of uniting liberty and order. Like most contemporaries of his persuasion, Grimston had a pedantic way of emphasizing the most commonplace sentiments by the longest Latin words he could find in the dictionary. When welcoming Charles II., on behalf of the parliamentissimum parliamentum, as he called it, the King characteristically cut him short, "Rise up, you old rebel, and speak English like a man"; seventeen years later, *à propos* of a Bill for changing from death to imprisonment the penalty for Romish priests and Jesuits, Grimston showed his forcible command of the vernacular by the remark: "Is this the way to prevent Popery? We may as soon make a good fan out of a pig's tail as a good Bill out of this." Under Grimston the Convention House showed its loyalty to the devotional traditions of St. Stephen's by at once voting a thanksgiving service for the nation's riddance of the Cromwells. As the sagacious Pierrepoint observed, the Restoration might as well begin by a show of piety. Resolutions for special services, for prayers, or fasts, and for thanks to General Monk, formed the first business at St. Stephen's. On May 1st, Charles sent from Breda, by Sir John Grenville, the first of his letters to the House. No voice dissenting from the King's return was heard; if it had been lifted up the House would not have shown itself really representative in listening to any such utterance. On May 10th the House unanimously nominated, and instructed, its commissioners to proceed to the King at Breda.

Of this deputation Denzil Holles was a foremost member; he had, since Oliver's death, been a leader in the movement, now about successfully to be accomplished. Holles, unlike

Vane, had never sympathised with the Independents; he had acted for years as the House of Commons' head of the Presbyterians. Events had developed new aspects of his character and views. He had never been inconsistent. From the day that, in 1629, he helped to force Speaker Finch to keep the chair till Eliot had completed his statement, Holles never changed either his opinions or his tactics. Naturally bitter, Holles differed from Cromwell in being constitutionally intolerant. The Spanish general, conjured by his priestly confessor to forgive his enemies, naively remarked "that he had none, as he had long since shot them all." Cromwell's forbearance may have borne a family likeness to the charity of Marshal Prim. Cromwell, when not actively opposed in his personal designs, was content to live in peace with all; so long as he had his own way, he was the enemy of no man and of no opinion. The King gone, Laud and high Anglicanism suppressed, the Protector had no quarrel with any of the religious or political sects of the time, provided they did not stay in the way of his sunlight. Holles had been intended by nature for, he had been brought up in, the austerest and most pitilessly persecuting sect of Presbyterianism. Unlike Cromwell, he could not differ from an opinion in Church or State without wishing all those who held it to be silenced or exterminated. Cromwell re-admitted the Jews to England, after centuries of expulsion he even showed himself more impartial to Papists, and more long-suffering of their religious rites, than Charles I. had ever been. Holles, could he have had his way, would have ordered every Romanist or Romaniser to the stake, and would have seen every Hebrew, with his money-bags, roasted in his own house. That Oliver alone kept the victorious House of Commons from excesses and fanaticisms of the most savage kind is shown by the fact that, during his absence, and under the Presbyterian control of Denzil Holles, the Assembly passed an ordinance for the punishment by

death of all who held Atheism, Arianism, Arminianism; Baptists or Quakers were heavily fined or imprisoned with hard labour; the gallows or the scaffold awaited those who could not receive the mysteries of the Trinity, or had doubts as to the litteral inspiration of the whole Old and New Testament. The crime of acquiescing in infant baptism as lawful and valid, or of holding that a man is bound to believe no more than he can understand, at once doomed the criminal to the dungeon. His instigation or approval of these severities proved Holles to be, not so much a bad or necessarily a brutal man, as spiritually and politically the child of his age—the product of the influences amid which he had been brought up. Like Vane, he foresaw that Cromwell must ultimately make himself in fact, if not in name, a King; when, therefore, the parting of the ways came, Holles separated from him, and with honest bitterness opposed the Protector in all his words and ways. When not perverted by passion, the judgment of Holles seldom failed to be sound. Hence the leading part in bringing about the Restoration now taken by this remarkable man; in the peerage that he received as his reward from Charles was nothing for which he need blush.

The new Sovereign had brought back, at the age of thirty, from his foreign exile, a thorough knowledge of French and foreign politics, a shrewd insight into human nature, and a diction to the voices, that pass for veneal, an incapacity for any of the virtues that are great; he had carefully cultivated an unusual turn for physical science in all its branches; he liked talking, he detested walking, but he would back himself to saunter against any man in his kingdom. As to politics, he thought a King, who in himself or in his ministers might be called to account by Parliament, reigned, but did not govern.

Denzil Holles, in his first speech under Charles II., proved himself an adept, not less in the compliments of courtiership than in the phrases of pietism, laying himself and all he had

at His Majesty's feet, lifting up his heart and hands to Heaven for a long and happy reign. The House, in small things as well as great, hastened to display the same loyal temper. The King's brothers, like the King himself, might be in want of ready money. The House, therefore, voted the Duke of York £10,000 and the Duke of Gloucester £5,000. The Royal wardrobe was reported by Mr. Annesly, a member of the House, to be low and his palace to want fresh furniture. The Commons voted a rich bed of velvet or satin, embroidered with gold, laced and lined with silver, two thick fustian quilts to lie under the satin quilts, one pair of fustian blankets, one pair of Spanish blankets, six pairs of Holland sheets, item two other beds for the Royal use with all fittings on the same scale of grandeur. The House appointed a committee of experts to see and report to it that the Royal table-linen was of the best quality, as well as that the Royal coach it ordered was fitted with all the latest improvements, and that the Royal liveries in crimson were of the best material which money could buy. Then came the King's under-linen, several suits of the best Kersey fabric—also a supply of flags for the King's private barge, not less than for the Royal fleet; the Union Jack did not come into use before James I. in the year 1606; its predecessor was called simply a Jack. These ensigns were to be specially manufactured of superfine silk. These votes of the House for the personal requirements of Charles were passed unanimously. They were supported amongst others by Andrew Marvell, who has commemorated them in the following lines:

"Of a tall stature, and of sable hue,
Much like the son of Kish, that lofty Jew;
Twelve years compleat he suffer'd in exile,
And kept his father's asses all the while.
At length, by wonderful impulse of fate,
The people call him home to help the state:
And what is more, they send him money too,
And cloath him all, from head to foot, anew;
Nor did he such small favours then disdain,
Who in his thirtieth year began his reign."

Having been generous, the House could now afford to be charitable; it proceeded to an Act of Pardon or Indemnity for all concerned in the trial and death of Charles I. In these discussions, the son of Speaker Lenthall, an Oxfordshire member, placed on record his inheritance only of his father's Royalist proclivities: "Whoso drew a sword against the late King committed an offence as high as he that cut off the King's head." This was too much even for the present chairman, the complaisant Sir Harbottle Grimston; Mr. Lenthall was called to kneel at the Bar to receive the reprimand of the House; but for the auspicious events of the hour, a severer penalty, he was told, would have been inflicted. The attainder of the late John Bradshaw, of the late Oliver Cromwell and of Blake and Ireton, was now voted by acclamation; whatever goods they had left behind them were confiscated; their bodies were disinterred and hung in chains. It was next reported to the House that the Earl of Portland had discovered, among different articles concealed in his grounds, a statue of Charles I.; he proposed to present it to the nation. The grateful Commons ordered that a place should be found for the effigy at Charing Cross. Here, from that day to this it has stood. On May 29th, 1660, the House of Commons, following Mr. Speaker Grimston and Serjeant-at-Arms with the mace, three abreast, went in procession to pay their respects to the King at Whitehall; Charles had landed at Dover Pier on the previous Sunday, May 26th; he was received with every mark of respectful affection by General Monk and with exuberant enthusiasm by all classes of his people; his entry into London proved a triumphal progress; as he alighted at the palace, he said with gratified nonchalance to Sir Ashley Cooper, that if he had known people had been so glad to see him he would have come long before. Once more the former anti-courtier and republican, William Prynne, now member for Bath, took the lead on the Royalist side in

promoting conferences between the two Houses; distributed broadcast a pamphlet he had written, denouncing the horrid murderers of Charles I., and became the first among the Commoners to take the oath of allegiance to Charles II. The keenest debates enlivening the early summer of 1660, were those on the exceptions to be made to the Indemnity or Oblivion Bill, already granted to the enemies of the late King. The chief persons, to whom the benefit of this act was not to be extended, were first indicated by the former anti-courtier and ardent republican, Prynne, who now surpassed, in admiration for kingship and all its works, the strongest of hereditary Royalists.

At first there were no exceptions to immunity from capital punishment. Among the most noteworthy of the less heinous criminals, never sentenced to death, but now lying in prison, were John Desborough, John Ireton and Arthur Hazelrig. These, it was suggested, should not share in the clemency so far as concerned punishments not capital extended to others who had taken part against Charles. At the same time was dealt with the case of Bulstrode Whitelocke, who, amid all these changes, remained strenuous and irrepressible. The division, taken after a debate upon Whitelocke, gave him a majority of forty-one, the figures being one hundred and seventy-five to one hundred and thirty-four. Whitelocke, though among the most moderate of his party, was personally unpopular in the Convention House. Prynne, in particular, assailed and persecuted him; his case came repeatedly forward; neither his life nor his liberty ever seems to have been in appreciable jeopardy.

The House had now resolved itself into a court of justice; it affected all the forms and authority of judicial procedure; it haled before it anyone, reasonably or not, it suspected of republicanism. In this way, some seventeen or twenty persons were, what it called, tried. None appear to have

been put to death. Another member of the House, tainted by republican associations, but now anxious to miss no chance of proving his loyalty, was Serjeant Tyrrel; he moved the House first against Hugh Peters, the Independent preacher, who had instigated Cromwell to many of his extremes, and Hewlett, the reputed executioner of Charles. The Commons, however, voted that both these men might be left to the ordinary law. John Milton, the poet, had been often asked to allow himself to be nominated for St. Stephen's; the only public life, known by the poet of "Paradise Lost," was official not parliamentary; he did not resign his secretaryship till after Richard Cromwell's abdication; he had written nothing which made any great national mark since the noble sonnet on the massacre of the Vaudois in 1655; whatever his disappointment at the results of the dictatorship, Milton never left Cromwell. His later, less declamatory and more politically constructive pamphlets were much inferior to his earlier pieces; he had now consulted his safety by hiding from his enemies, numerous as these were in the Convention House. Later in the session which had witnessed the restoration of Charles, the poet was summoned before the House to be questioned concerning his writings, defending the proceedings against the late King. With Milton was arraigned on the same plea another culprit, less illustrious, John Goodwin. Both escaped with no more severe a punishment than a brief loss of liberty and an order that their writings should be burnt by the common hangman. Among the less trivial and uninteresting discussions of the Convention during the rest of their time were those on the clergy and on religion; these elicited entertaining and characteristic expressions of opinion from Sir John Northcote, General Monk's colleague in the representation of Devonshire, from Prynne, from an ancestor of Sir Robert Walpole and from a Northamptonshire member of the well-known House of

Commons' family of Knightley; Sir John Northcote drew down some reprimand on himself by saying that deans and chapters did nothing but eat and drink, rise up to play, or something worse. Prynne said he could not be for bishops, unless they would derive their power from the King and not vaunt themselves to be *jure divino.* Mr. Knightley was rather inclined to be for the clergy generally, and thought that a few bad parsons ought not to make the clerical function criminal.

This session, too, saw the final disappearance from St. Stephen's of the well-known names of the ex-Speaker Lenthall and of Sir Henry Vane. Both of these, their life alone excepted, were not to be included in the act of pardon. The Indemnity debates were, as a fact, interrupted by a message of autobiographical interest from the former Chairman of the Long Parliament; in the first place, he wished to disabuse the House of the idea that his duties in the chair had ever been handsomely requited; as a fact, his legal salary still remained unpaid. Secondly, he wished to place on record his penitence for his connection with the deliberations that ended in the death of Charles. Of the Indemnity business, nothing further was heard except a discussion followed by an address to the King that the lives of Vane and Lambert should be spared; the request was as readily granted by Charles as afterwards it was pitilessly disregarded. The Commons had already, as has been seen, set up Charles with a suitable wardrobe and a sufficiency of table-linen; they were now anxious to provide him with a wife. This discussion generally followed the lines of and contained frequent references to the debate on a like topic in the case of Queen Elizabeth. The only limitation to the King's choice that at all commended itself to the House was a suggestion that he might be graciously pleased to fix his affections on a Protestant. It now began to occur to the House that Charles,

who never troubled to conceal his dislike of public business, might have had enough of the session. The rest of its business was transacted with extreme dispatch. The one point on which it allowed itself any prolonged and applausive discussion was the suggestion that no time should be lost in exhuming the bodies of Robert Blake, of Oliver Cromwell, of Colonel Pride, wherever they lay, and hanging them in chains. Scarcely in less disfavour were the Presbyterians, whose help had been essential to Charles.

The duties of revenge performed, the House therefore had now to conciliate the King's religious partisans. The better observance of the Lord's Day was provided for in a Bill which Sir Walter Erle declared to be the special care of Heaven; for, in a former House, a member who slighted such a measure as this, instantly fell down dead. Sir William Lewis, a member of the Convention House, is the first Parliament man known who declared himself for an equality of rights of women with men; he was at this time active against a Bill for enforcing malcontent wives to remain with their husbands; the proposal was supported, among others, by Prynne, who modestly disclaimed any authority on the subject, never having had a good or bad wife in his life. Mr. Walpole thought the measure so hard upon the ladies, that if a bridge were made from Dover to Calais, the wives of England would certainly all leave the kingdom; England had formerly been the Heaven for women; it would now be the Hell. In its distrust of militarism, the House reflected the existing temper of the nation; the debate, November 16th, 1660, on Mr. Knightley's Militia Bill, is noticeable because of the vehement protests it elicited against bringing in martial law. Captain Titus, like later members of the Chamber to which he belonged, is known only as a zealous post-office reformer; to a measure on this subject, of which Titus had charge, was moved by Sir Walter Erle an amendment that during the

session the letters of all members should go free. Sir Heneage Finch called this a poor mendicant proviso, below the honour of the House; he made a gesture, implying his readiness to kick it into the lobby; he might have done so actually had not at this moment the courtierly Holles entered the Chamber with the news that the King was waiting for the Commons in the Upper House, that he might at once dissolve Parliament. So ended the Assembly which, first, as a Convention for re-establishing the monarchy, secondly, as a Lower House of a regular Parliament, had sat exactly eight months. The speech with which Charles wound up the session may have been chiefly composed by his Chancellor, Clarendon; it has, however, some touches eminently characteristic of the King—when God sent him back to his kingdom he brought with him an extraordinary affection and esteem for the House of Commons; there had been a "learned" and an "unlearned" Parliament; he hoped this would for ever be known as the "healing" and "blessed" Parliament.

# CHAPTER IV.

## FROM SERVILITY TO INDEPENDENCE AT ST. STEPHEN'S.

Charles II. and representative Government—The Pensionary Parliament—The King's Speech from the Throne—The cavaliers predominant—Sir Edward Turner, Speaker—Address from the Chair—Well-known names in the Pensionary Parliament—Sanitary legislation—The House partake of the Sacrament—The Indemnity and Oblivion Bill—Grants made to the King—Tyrannical action by the Lower House—Measures against Nonconformists—Court managers and "conspiracies"—Fate of Sir Harry Vane—Treason, as defined by the Pensionary Parliament—Charles's desire for religious indulgence—Alexander Popham—Sir Richard Temple—Discussion on Bill for educating King's children—A ridiculous incident—The Speaker, Seymour—His haughtiness—Decreasing subservience to the King of the Pensionary Parliament—Bill for taxing playgoers—The cutting of Sir John Coventry's nose—Numerous petitions against Romanism—Charles's promises concerning religion—The Test Act—Charles's attempts at despotism—Causes of its failure—Sir Robert Howard—His attempts to settle differences between Lords and Commons—Meetings of Parliament out of London—Charles's second House of Commons—Meets at Oxford—Sir George Downing—His knowledge of finance—The founder of administrative finance—The extravagances of the Court—The malversation of funds—The case of Skinner and the East India Company—Sir Samuel Barnardiston at the Bar of the Lords—Estrangement between the two Houses—The Shirley case—Increasing strength of the Commons—The beginning of the Party System—Growing strength of the Opposition—Sir E. Dering in the Opposition—Sir Thomas Lee and Mr. Garroway secret tools of the Court—The real leaders of the Opposition—Lord William Russell—His high character—Lord Cavendish, afterwards first Duke of Devonshire—Other well-known names.

THE real disposition of Charles II. towards representative government will be best discovered, not in his ceremonial protestations of devotion, but in his colloquial comments. He had no wish for his subjects to show him the homage exacted by the grand Turk; but he hated a lot of fellows prying and

searching into his affairs. The first House of Commons personally summoned by this King represented, even more exuberantly than its predecessor, the unmeasured gratification of the country at having rid itself of the austerities, the hypocrises, and the despotisms of the Cromwellian epoch. The loyal adulations wherein the Commoners vied with each other, and were only outdone by the hyperboles of their Speaker, represented, rather than caricatured, the popular feeling outside St. Stephen's.

On May 8th, 1661, met that House of Commons known by the epithet of Pensionary, because its members were so extensively in the pay of their restored Sovereign, or of his foreign patron, the French King. The tact and cleverness of the second Charles are revealed in every paragraph of his Speech from the Throne. Next to the miraculous blessing of Almighty God, he imputes the good disposition and security now prevailing to the happy Act of Indemnity and Oblivion for past offenders, initiated by the Convention House; that measure had not yet, indeed, officially been confirmed. To remove the doubts already thrown on his sincerity, Charles solemnly assured the House that the confirmation would not be delayed. The Convention House had contained enough of the old Puritan or Presbyterian element to constitute a check, if necessary, upon the loyal extravagances of the majority. In the House of 1661, the cavaliers were the uncontrolled masters of the situation. Many or most of these members had suffered, in person or in purse, for their loyalty to the Crown. At Knowsley, the Lancashire estate of the Derby family, a tablet commemorates the ingratitude of Charles II. in withholding the Royal assent from a Bill, passed by both Houses, for restoring to the family property the son of that earl who had fallen for the King's father. Now that the public road was the King's highway once more, the cavaliers naturally looked for reparation from the men who had

affronted and plundered them on it when it was Commonwealth soil. Oliver had promoted tailors and tinkers to his House of Lords; he had enriched beggars by endowing them with the estates of anciently descended county houses; in many cases, therefore, the dispossessed or maltreated Royalists might expect solid satisfaction for their wrongs. In his opening speech, Charles justifiably might have said more; reasonably and decently, he could scarcely have said less.

The first Speaker of the Pensionary House symbolised in his own person the quality of the Assembly. Sir Edward Turner, a leading official of the Exchequer, had been convicted of receiving bribes from the East India Company. The courtiers, who secured his nomination, inspired him with his introductory discourse; the address to the Throne, drawn up by Turner, passed, of course, without a division. It assured the King that if the affections of all Englishmen could make him happy, if the riches of a wealthy nation could make him great, if the strength of a warlike people could make him considerable, he was the greatest monarch in the world. "And this," grimly commented a private member, "of a King, in whose reign the Exchequer was bankrupt, a Dutch admiral, with a broom, emblematically fixed to his mast-head, swept the Channel of English shipping, and the Sovereign himself became the hireling of the French monarch." For the rest, the Speaker's address to the Sovereign flattered the known tastes of the Royal listener by excursions into political philosophy, and by parallels between the wilderness wanderings of Israel and the desolations of kingless England. Charles seemed especially to be amused at a lively description of his kingdom in the ruinous hands of constitution-mongers and political quacks. "Our reformers," said Turner, "of all ages, sexes, and degrees; of all professions and trades; the very cobbler went beyond his last; the government of these was the sickness and plague of the nation.

The corruptions and venality of the Pensionary House justly earned for it its title; its personnel could not be called either unrepresentative or undistinguished; it consisted, indeed, of Royal nominees, returned by the machinery of the Court, practically at the dictation of Lord Chancellor Hyde, also Prime Minister, and now created Earl of Clarendon. It includes, however, names not to be mentioned without respect; many of these still retain their honourable or interesting associations; a descendant of Lucius Carey, Lord Falkland, sat for Arundel, with an ancestor of the Boyle family, Lord Orrery. Sussex chose a John Ashburnham and Sir John Pelham as its shire knights. John Hampden's old constituency, Wendover, in Buckinghamshire, was still represented by one of his name and family. Wenlocke even then sent a Francis Lawley. Tavistock still had its William Russell. Taunton its Sir William Portman and Wyndham. Westmorland had elected a Musgrave. Whitchurch had found a cadet of the Portsmouth family—Henry Wallop. Weymouth, a progenitor of the great Duke of Marlborough, Mr. Winston Churchill.

The opening debates on the Address to the King make what is probably the first mention on record of sanitary legislation; the Government will give special attention to draining and irrigating certain parts of the country, especially the Midlands; elsewhere, too, the "policy of sewage," with which was to be taunted a Conservative statesman in the future, will not be neglected; so will air be mended and earth made. Having testified their homage to the King, the Commoners hastened to record their allegiance to the Church. By vote, passed without debate or division, the House proceeded to take the Sacrament en masse, expelling any member who demurred to the rite. Neither the presence of Presbyterian members at St. Stephen's, nor the part taken by this sect in securing the Restoration, prevented a vote for burning copies

of the League and Covenant in Cheapside and in Palace Yard. At the King's instance, without any dissentient voice, but not without much secret discontent, the House now hurried the Indemnity and Oblivion Bill through its remaining stages. The Royal assent given to this, Charles reminded the House that money was now due to him. A West of England member, Sir E. Powell, on this showed great alertness, and claimed relief for the money fines imposed upon him by Commonwealth extortioners. Nearly the last business of the session was for the House to show its resolve of making the Indemnity Bill a sham; in the case of twenty-one regicides deceased, their estates were confiscated; four of these malefactors, who had the misfortune to survive—Lord Monson, Sir H. Mildmay, Robert Wallop, and Sir J. Harrington, not yet in custody—were to be degraded of their honours and titles, drawn with ropes round their necks, on sledges, from the Tower to Tyburn, and imprisoned for the rest of their lives. The next session brought no change in the temper of St. Stephen's towards the Sovereign; the money grants, already ordered, were confirmed; the King's necessary expenses were to be provided for by £1,260,000 for eighteen months, to be paid in six quarterly instalments. A little later the Crown's further needs were supplied by a duty upon chimney-hearths in all houses above two shillings a year for ever.

The Royal wants were thus sufficiently provided for. The Royal promises of liberty to faith, conscience, and opinion were receiving effect at the hands of the House by the rigorous enforcement of a Uniformity Act, carried by acclamation, and by the gagging of printing presses throughout the country. The Commons had permanently adopted a short way with all grievances, not by removing the abuse alleged, but by silencing the complainant. The Press Licensing Bill, now hurried through all its stages, coerced falsehood and abuse by indiscriminately sealing the lips of justice and truth. The Com-

mons were not to be checked in the course on which they had now entered by the inability of the Lords to keep pace with them. The Upper House demurred to a Bill against the Quakers that was particularly to the taste of the Lower; abominable practices had been alleged against that sect; the "Spirit" had prompted, it was said, murder and other crimes. At the same leading, parents had been instigated to starve their children, because it was written, "Man liveth not by bread alone"; one Quaker killed his cat because she had taken a Sabbath mouse; another slew his mother and brother because they liked the Anglican Liturgy. These reports, doubtless inventions or monstrous exaggerations, produced from this Orthodox House severe statutes against the mistaken sect. George Fox had founded the Society of Friends in 1643. He was now in the prime of manhood, and of indomitable energy. Nearly a hundred of his followers had died in dungeons during the Commonwealth; between three and four thousand of them were imprisoned at the Restoration. Fox, therefore, repeatedly petitioned the King and the Commons; no legislative relief may have been granted, but the penal statutes were more sparingly enforced.

The Lower House displayed its further zeal for his most religious Majesty by pressing on the several portions of the Act of Uniformity, sent down to it from the Peers; no person, unless episcopally ordained, was to be qualified for any living or ecclesiastical dignity, of whatever degree. The manner in which these proposals were wrangled over was a scandal to religion and a sin against decency by the House. The debates were prolonged, because they afforded the sole means of escape for the evil humours that filled the factions of the moment; members could no longer fight about the Crown; the only available subject of controversy was religion. "You know," said Bolingbroke, in the eighteenth century, "that the

House of Commons resembles a pack of foxhounds; it likes the man who shows them sport." The conditions under which the Pensionary House existed prevented its badgering bishops, but gave it a capital cry against nonconforming parsons; the prelates, indeed, had been reinstated in the Upper Chamber directly this Parliament met. The mover of that proposal in the House had been a Presbyterian; when he rose, he was expected to suggest clerical restrictions. He astounded everyone by his proposal on behalf of that episcopal order, which Presbyterianism abominated. There were some two thousand beneficed clergy, of whose orthodoxy the House was not satisfied, in the Established Church. The Pensioners, with great glee, ordered that all clergymen, who, before Bartholomew's day, 1662, would not subscribe every article of the Uniformity Act, should be expelled from their livings. The time limit was reached; these clerical defaulters, with their wives and families, were sent adrift upon the world for the good pleasure of the devout cavaliers of St. Stephen's.

Whenever the Court managers at St. Stephen's thought the House lagging in its vindictive procedure against possible opponents, past, present or future, of monarchy, they opportunely discovered some plot against the re-established order in Church or State, set on foot by the spiritual or political enemies of the King. Sir John Packington, member for Worcester, had a remarkably keen scent for conspiracies of this kind; the offenders were not often doomed to capital punishment, but, on each periodical alarm, hundreds or thousands of loose and suspicious persons, on the unanimous vote of an excited House, were hunted from their homes out of London, Westminster, or wherever else they had settled themselves. When Charles had issued from Breda his assurance of amnesty to the regicides, Harry Marten, whose scampish reputation had secured him such gentle treatment from Charles, remarked that he had never obeyed any

proclamation before; he hoped he should not be hanged for taking the King's word now. In his prison at Chepstow, Marten heard of the fate awaiting Vane at the hands of the Pensioners. "Cut off Harry Vane's head!" he said. "Why, without him, there would have been no parliamentary representation for England to-day." Vane, indeed, had done more than anyone to organize the internal economy of St. Stephen's; he was the first electoral reformer of the seventeenth century. His quarrel with Oliver on general grounds was embittered by his resistance to the admission of Irish or Scotch members at Westminster, before a thorough re-distribution of seats. The Convention House had acquiesced with the exception of Lambert and Vane from the Indemnity Bill on the King's promise that both lives should be spared. The Pensionary Parliament clamoured for the Attorney-General to proceed against each of them. On July 1st, the subject was debated at St. Stephen's; Vane, it was urged by his few friends, had been assured of his safety by Charles. But, by a majority of fifteen votes, one hundred and twenty-four to one hundred and nine, a measure in fact, though not in form, a Bill of Attainder against Vane was decided on; it is creditable to the family of Clarendon that in this division his son, Lord Cornbury, acted as teller for the minority. In a pamphlet, if not in a speech, on this occasion, Prynne pointed out that this gratuitous vindictiveness of the Pensionary House amounted to an infringement of the Royal prerogative; for the House had taken the power of life and death out of the Sovereign's hands. The execution of Vane at Tower Hill was a judicial murder as gross as that of Charles I. at Whitehall, perpetrated, as Hallam has made it clear,* without constitutional apology or political justice. Of all who had known Vane in the Chamber which his character had so long adorned,

* *Constitutional History*, Vol. II., p. 441.

Clarendon's son alone seems to have raised a voice against the iniquity. The House, having glutted itself with Vane's blood, was content that Lambert should linger out his days in a Guernsey jail.

The House had thus put its master's enemies out of the way. It now devised expedients for the protection of its own and of its Sovereign's persons; to say, to write, or to do anything prejudicial to the Royal person or name, was to be capital treason; to hint that His Majesty was a heretic was to disqualify for any employment in Church or State; the suggestion of there being legislative power in Commons or Lords without the King, was to invite a penalty of premunire. As for its own inviolability, the House ensured that by prohibiting all gatherings in the Westminster precinct and the presentation of any petition subscribed by more than ten or twenty hands. If Speaker Turner's address to the Crown when the Pensionary session began, were a fulsome burlesque of Royalty, his discourse on the adjournment, July 30th, was a harmless string of historical platitudes. Before the end of the year, the House was once more in session. During the short autumnal sittings, nothing of importance was done. When, in February, 1662, a new parliamentary year began, Charles had gratified his servants at St. Stephen's by marrying Catherine of Braganza. The sale of Dunkirk had been arranged for a sum not far short of a million of money. Several of the Presbyterian leaders had been offered bishoprics; only one, Reynolds, seems to have accepted. The King's Roman Catholic proclivities were giving his parliamentary pensioners some disquiet.

In his opening address to the Commons in the next session, 1662-3, Charles truly described himself as being, by nature, an enemy to all severity for religion and conscience. Therefore, he commended indulgence to the House; he

had already when at Breda, not only issued this document, but promised to use his influence for securing to it legislative effect. The House received it with favour, but expressed a hope that the King would see his way to recommend laws against the growth and increase of Popery, as well as against licentiousness and impiety of all kinds; these vices injured the nation, materially not less than morally; they were, therefore, subjects as proper for legislation as trade and commerce, which, as a fact, the Commons bracketed with their ethical and religious suggestions.

Charles thought it important to conciliate the Protestant prejudices of the Lower House. Among the Court nominees in the House whom he periodically employed on confidential business, were Alexander Popham of Somersetshire, and Sir Richard Temple of Worcestershire. Sir John Popham at one time represented Bridgwater; he had an estate not far distant from that belonging to the Pyms at Brymore; in prosperous years his revenues were considerable; these had been much wasted by the spendthrift family of one of his descendants. Alexander Popham, probably the grandson of the Speaker, had gone into the Pensionary House, less from a sense of Parliamentary fitness or political ambition than from a resolve to use his opportunities as a member, socially and financially to build up the broken fortunes of an ancient and impoverished race. What Pym had been in his business management of the House and especially of its relations with the capitalists of the City, that his later fellow countryman, Alexander Popham, showed himself in his aptitude for financial negotiation with men, whose purses generally yielded to the pressure of dexterous intrigue; in Alexander Popham, the blunt manner of a country squire concealed the cunning without the villainy of an Iago. Popham saw his way honourably, as he thought, to remunerate himself for the trouble of acting as pecuniary agent in the House to the

King. He even assured Charles of his ability to whip up votes enough to secure him a revenue of some £2,000,000 a year; this, with the receipts of the excise and of other duties, would have made Charles independent of any French pay-masters. Clarendon got wind of the transaction; he quietly asked his Royal master whether he was satisfied of Popham's ability to fulfil his promise; he then plainly warned the King that there could be no better guarantee of a sufficient revenue than to gain the hearts of his subjects. Popham's great scheme, therefore, fell through; he found, however, many smaller occasions of serving his Sovereign and himself.

The Temples, some of whom had settled in Ireland, others in Worcestershire, had not always been exclusively affected to the Royal cause. A marriage alliance with the cavalier Osbornes communicated an anti-republican bias to at least some of the stock. The Sir Richard Temple of the Pensionary House was a relative of the Temple who had sat in the Long Parliament; the talent of political finesse, shown by the Temple of 1662, was not an hereditary gift; his chief fault seems to have been a weakness for big talk, and a tendency to exaggerate the influence of his family in affairs; he had also social ambitions at Court; through his friend the Earl of Bristol, he let his willingness to serve the King in the House reach the Royal ear. Bristol, a Roman Catholic Peer of chivalrous temper, resented some parliamentary rumours which had got afloat about Temple, as scandalous to his friend and offensive to himself. This nobleman therefore, obtained the Speaker's consent to appear at the Bar of the House and to state all he knew about the transaction. So far from Temple having asked him to act as intermediary at Court, he declared upon his honour not a word on the subject had passed between them; for himself, though a Catholic of the Roman Church, he was not a Catholic of the Roman Court, but a loyal subject of the

English monarchy, who would tell the King, as the Duke of Sully told Henry IV., that if he meant to reign, he must profess and maintain the national religion. Whether, in respect of religion, the King's friend in the House was Popham or Temple, the satisfactory result ensued; the debates on the Indulgence Act were suppressed not less skilfully than had been the earlier discussions on the King's forthcoming marriage.

Several sessions passed before there quite disappeared from the internal economy of the House the disturbing effects of the period of House of Commons anarchy, coincident with that of the Cromwellian encroachments. If Lenthall had been a time-server, the Chair, while he filled it, had become the symbol and the seat of a real authority. Lenthall's near successors were Court lawyers, who brought the Speakership into obloquy or contempt. Nor was it till 1673 that, as presently will be seen, a country gentleman, Edward Seymour, restored to the presidency of the Chamber some of the dignity and respect which it had lost in the hands of barristers. Meanwhile, the House was agitated by constant scenes, whose violence presaged the disturbances of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the session of 1676-7 the Lords sent down a Bill for educating the King's children in the Protestant religion. The discussion caused the religious passions of the hour to flame forth; Mr. Mallet was horrified, because, in the measure, were interlineations and figures; these were unparliamentary; he chiefly objected to the Bill because it set up nine mitres above the Crown. *Monstrum horrendum.* Mr. Vaughan was pained, because the Bill actually made the King capable of error; this, he circuitously argued, would tend to infringe upon the impeaching power of the Commons. Andrew Marvell, who still sat for Kingston-on-Hull, thought the subject treated with unbecoming levity; he himself proceeded to create a disturbance, whose absurdity alone saved it from being scan-

dalous. Walking to his place in the House, he stumbled at Sir Philip Harcourt's foot; in recovering his balance, he seemed to touch Sir Philip rather roughly. The Speaker gravely acquainted the House that he had seen Mr. Marvell box Sir Philip Harcourt's ear. No more was said at the time. The next day Mr. Marvell explained that it was only his fun; Sir Philip was his intimate friend; he had only touched him in the way of endearment. Harcourt confirmed his friend's account. The motion of an ex-Speaker, Sir John Charlton, to send Marvell to the Tower was put aside. Sir Harry Goodrick was willing to believe the thing done in jest, but it was not fit to be done here. After an hour or two's discussion as to the exact nature of the blow given and received, Mr. Garroway moved to reprimand both and let the thing drop. Throughout these incidents there sat in the Chair a cavalier, with whose appearance likenesses, still extant, have acquainted us; abundant ringlets, not his own, poured from his head over his shoulders; the expression of his face was one of pride and profligacy; his whole bearing was supercilious; his voice had been disciplined into the fashionable falsetto of the time. As guardian of order in the House, he represented an experiment. Turner, the first Speaker of the Restoration, had been succeeded by Serjeant Sir Job Charlton; he only lasted eleven days; he was then sent home permanently invalided. All these occupants of the Chair had been lawyers; none of them seems to have been popular. It is said, though in view of what afterwards occurred, most likely without truth, that Charles, seeing the gentleman of the long robe physically fail in the labours of the Chair, suggested a country gentleman by way of change; he would be likely to have better stamina; field sports and quarter sessions would also be likely personally to make him more acceptable. However this may have been, the unanimous choice of the House fell upon the haughtiest Commoner of the time. The Speakers already mentioned had

always modestly deprecated their nomination and prayed to be excused the honour. Seymour believed himself to be unfavourably regarded by his Sovereign, whose approval of himself he knew, by tradition, to be merely a matter of form. Seymour, therefore, at the Bar of the Lords, swaggered into the presence of the King, saying no more than, "I am come hither for your Majesty's approbation." Charles, instead of being cowed by this arrogance, negatived Seymour's nomination; nor was it till after much negotiation and arrangement that the King actually confirmed in the Chair the supercilious squire, proud of his descent from Lord-Protector Somerset; Seymour, however, had recently made the characteristic remark, that the Duke of Somerset was a member of his family, not he of the duke's; at a meeting of the Privy Council, leaning over the King's shoulder, he had told Charles in a loud whisper not to prevaricate. His career, indeed, was only now beginning; in his old age he was to treat William III. with the airs of a superior; in the next reign, when dismissed from the household comptrollership by Queen Anne, he was to send word that he would return his staff by the common carrier; Seymour's manner to individual members of the House was the same as to the King; a lawyer, meeting him in Westminster Hall, did not sufficiently uncap to him; the Speaker at once ordered the mace to take Serjeant Pemberton into custody; in the servile Stuart days, Seymour, however, did good service in maintaining or reviving the St. Stephen's tradition of independence of the Crown. Charles was waiting on his Throne in the Upper House to prorogue Parliament. Till the Bill of Supply had been returned, according to precedent, from the Lords, Speaker Seymour, though summoned repeatedly to the Upper House, only replied, he would be torn by wild horses rather than leave the Chair. The Bill made its appearance; then, not till then, did Seymour leave the House for the Royal presence.

This Speaker's official term witnessed the subsidence of the exaggerated devotion to the Crown, in which the Pensionary House at first had revelled. The Act for repealing, as the King's indulgence declaration promised, all Acts against Romanists and other nonconformists, evoked feelings and expressions in the House that showed its attachment to its King to be on the wane. The renewal and the tightening of the Conventicle Act of 1664, the Corporation Act, enforcing the Anglican Sacrament and a declaration against Transubstantiation upon all municipal officers, had gone through the House in sulky silence. The Commons were getting into an ill-humour with themselves; the rapidity of their conversion from Puritan Republicanism to monarchical passive resistance may have brought some conscious loss of self-respect. They were disposed on any issue, the more trifling the better, because the more likely to be mortifying, to quarrel with the Crown. A committee on ways and means had proposed to fill the Exchequer by taxing every playgoer, one shilling for the boxes, sixpence for the pit, and threepence for the gallery; the courtiers had organised a resistance to the proposal, which was, they said, an affront to the King, whose servants, and a part of whose pleasure the players were. Sir John Coventry, a county member of cavalier descent but tinged with Presbyterianism, was moved to make himself the mouthpiece of the outraged respectability of the kingdom. Was it, he asked, the actors or the actresses who were especially appreciated by the Sovereign? Popham and Temple vied with each other in carrying the remark to the King; a mark must be set on Sir John to deter others from taking like liberties in the future. On the night of the adjournment over Christmas, Sir John was preparing to go into the country to pass the festival; he had supped at his usual tavern in Suffolk Street; returning to his lodging about midnight, he was set upon by a pack of Royalist ruffians, marshalled under Sir Thomas

Sandys, of the Duke of Monmouth's regiment, and Lord O'Brien, the Earl of Inchiquin's son; Coventry was thrown down, jumped upon, and had the end of his nose nearly cut off; the indignation excited at St. Stephen's by the news, seems to have been the greater because Sir John Coventry had been thus maltreated by men, who, in society, seemed his own familiar friends. A week's discussion of the subject brought Sir John Coventry no material satisfaction, but witnessed the healing of the wounds inflicted by the Royal bullies, and resulted in a Bill to provide members with a guard against the attacks of street ruffians.

The Protestant feeling of the constituencies was making itself felt at St. Stephen's. The legislative restrictions on petitioning, already mentioned, did not prevent the receipt by members of numerously signed appeals, not to allow their loyalty to be an occasion for the country's relapse into Romanism. The debates on this subject were long and frequent; they were also half-hearted. The House was evidently but too glad when some fresh assurance, coming from the King, of entire devotion to the national religion, enabled it decently to pass on to other business. For the time, the spiritual energies of St. Stephen's had spent themselves; the House, like those whom it represented, was content to leave its religion in the hands of courtly theologians and of High Church bishops. Charles had promised not only relief to Evangelical consciences, but an adaptation of the Presbyterian polity, known as Ussher's plan, to Anglican conditions. The matter dropped; no attempt to revive it was made by a single question asked of ministers at Westminster; during the year of plague, 1665, the Houses sat at Oxford; they then passed a Bill, providing that all clergymen who had not signed the Act of Uniformity, should by oath declare the illegality on any pretence whatever of taking arms against the King or resisting any of his officials; to

refuse this oath was to be incapacitated from teaching in schools, and prohibited from coming within five miles of any city, corporate town, or parliamentary borough; the measure not only went through the Commons easily, but did not provoke a single division or protest. A little later, the King's friends in the popular Chamber brought forward a Bill for imposing the test, just described, upon all Englishmen, lay as well as clerical. That was lost by a majority of six (fifty-seven to fifty-one). It was not indeed the House of Commons, by its attitude towards Royal and ecclesiastical absolutism, that revived the languishing liberties of the country. The outrages on the national sense of respectability, inflicted by the standing spectacle of the Restoration Court; the popular associations clinging to the names of Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland, Louisa, Duchess of Portsmouth, and Nell Gwyn, produced a revolt of national sentiment that expelled the Stuarts. Notwithstanding its systematic subserviency to the Crown, and its indifference to many Royal usurpations, the House of Commons, under Charles II., abdicated none of its most important functions. It matured and enlarged its powers, as the supreme controller of the nation's affairs. The last but one of the Stuart reigns was marked by some displays and by many more menaces of kingly absolutism. Throughout all these, the country confirmed the habit it had already acquired of looking to a Chamber, often defective in its composition, sometimes unreasonable in the exercise of its authority, liable therefore to occasional unpopularity, as the depository of real authority, and the guarantee of that democratic element, which, in virtue of a monarchy, historically as much elective as hereditary, had from the first been inherent in the English system. Had the Stuarts, like the Tudors, recognised popular approval as a condition of Royal despotism, there might practically have been no place for the body which the House of Commons had now become. They

ignored the fact that the national constitution made the same provision for the republican as for the monarchical temper of the country. The greatest of English Sovereigns had so ordered their political administration and personal conduct, as themselves largely to satisfy these two opposite demands or tendencies in their subjects. Then the Sovereign himself fulfilled many of the duties of the representative Chamber. The opportunity of the House of Commons only came, when, forgetting the limited nature of English kingship, he began to rule independently of public opinion. By doing so, he at once irritated that sentiment. He organised it against himself in the Chamber, whose course is traced in these pages.

The net result of the chequered relations between the second Charles and the Commoners was the establishment of the principle that the Royal prerogative must, in practice, be bounded, not only by law but by the cordial co-operation of the men whom the constituencies send to maintain their rights at St. Stephen's. To come to details, among the rising members of the Pensionary House, was one of cavalier descent and of popular or even republican sympathies; after Andrew Marvell, Sir Robert Howard, though as a dramatist, only of the second rank, was probably the most distinguished man of letters in the House. Charles and his managers said Howard was waiting to be bought. Whatever offers may have been made to him, none were accepted. He had entered the House as an independent member; he never became the creature of the King, or the tool of any faction. Howard played an active part in the efforts to arrange the differences between the two Houses, consequent on the claim of the Lords to amend money bills; a measure prohibiting the planting of tobacco in England had been sent up to the Peers; the Commons complained that the proposal came back to them converted into a legalization of, and a tax on, tobacco growing; there were other commodities on which the

Upper House claimed the same right to levy duties; on this disagreement innumerable conferences between the two Chambers followed. Howard managed these with great adroitness; he did not secure the final establishment of a paramount power in these matters of the Lower House. He contrived a postponement of the decision by a timely prorogation at a moment favourable to the case of the Commons.

Early in the reign of James I. the unhealthiness of the Thames side in London threatened to compel Parliament to sit elsewhere; the inconvenience caused by such a change was soon found to be so great as to cause the idea to be abandoned; under Charles I. sanitary considerations moved the Houses to Oxford in 1625. Till the Stuart epoch, Parliament had not met out of London since the reign of Edward IV., 1463; before that date, of twenty Parliaments, convened by Edward II., one met at Northampton, three at York, three at Lincoln, one at Ripon; after the second Charles, the single Parliament of James II. assembled at Westminster; so did the Convention which brought in the Prince of Orange. Since the Revolution of 1688, the session has been rooted at Westminster as immutably as the Abbey itself. The forty-six Parliaments have all been at Westminster. In all, since the time of Simon de Montfort, two hundred and seventy odd Parliaments have been held; of these, only forty-three have assembled elsewhere than at Westminster. When, on October 9th, 1665, Charles II. for the second time met his second House of Commons, the great plague raged throughout the metropolitan area, the Commoners assembled in the Schools at Oxford. The business transacted in this House and the principles established made it of exceptional importance. The most considerable personage figuring in this session was not a courtier, or a minister of the King, but a public official of no very great note among his contemporaries. This is Sir George Downing, the founder of the college that

bears his name at Cambridge, though not the actual builder of the fabric; a Cambridgeshire baronet of ancient family for the time at which he lived, he was a State servant, exceptionally capable and conscientious; as member for Dunwich, he had, at pains, to instruct his constituents in the elements of policy and finance. He was about, in a very remarkable way, to turn to the national good the technical experience he had acquired as a teller of the Exchequer. After a debate of a very perfunctory kind, with little or no criticism of the Court statesmen, the House was voting for the Dutch war a supply of a million and a quarter; in the preceding year it had voted double as much. Downing alone possessed the courage and the knowledge necessary for effective comment upon expenditure so ruinous; alone among the Commoners, Downing recalled the precedence, established in the reigns of Richard II. and Henry IV., for the appropriation by the House to limited purposes of the supplies granted by it; when a courtier objected to the antiquity of this example, Downing begged his critic to refer to 1624, the last Parliament of James I., when, on the Crown's suggestion, the Commons paid the funds they granted for the relief of the Palatinate to commissioners, appointed by themselves. The second Charles had the good sense to follow the example of the first James instead of the advice of his State councillors. Downing's motion had been carried by a majority of one hundred and seventy-two to one hundred and two, November 25th, 1665. Clarendon, the first minister, was furious; Downing was a traitor for whom the cart-tail, the hangman's lash, and the pillory were too good. Charles humorously repeated his father's remark, that Parliament, like cats and women, become cursed by age. "Here," however, he said, "are the figures"; his great object was to get the advance easily; against Clarendon, therefore, he decided that the amendment should be accepted. Downing, therefore, is to

be regarded as the parent of the modern system of administrative finance; the right of appropriation once established, the system of estimates regularly laid before the House of Commons and voted by it, could only be a matter of time.

For the moment, the sequel to appropriation was another innovation; this, too, was suggested by Downing, and because it could not conveniently be evaded, was acquiesced in as usual with cynical good humour by Charles. The *annus mirabilis* of 1666 was memorable not only for the great fire of London, for the combined hostility of Louis XIV. and of the Dutch to England, but for the appointment by the Lower House of a committee to examine the accounts of military and naval officials. There was indeed another influence than that of Downing exerted in the same direction, with a wider effect perhaps than his. Andrew Marvell, Sir George Downing's brother member, did not speak much during these financial discussions in the House; what he did say and still more what he wrote in his pamphlets for the benefit of his electors, was as weighty in warning as temperate in tone. "The Court," said Marvell, "is at the highest pitch of want and luxury; the House of Commons is grown extremely chargeable to the King and odious to the people who are full of discontent." Well they might be. The House of Commons alone stood between the nation in its helplessness and the extortionate autocracy of the King. The House had begun by welcoming home, with sycophantic and sentimental devotion, an exiled spendthrift. It had since then consistently degraded itself to be the servile tool of the monarch or his minister; it had not raised a voice against the Treaty of Dover by which, for £300,000 and some worthless territory, the English were to help the French King against the Dutch, and for a yearly income of £200,000 was to embrace the Catholic faith. This, too, was a season at which the country was committed to an act of bankruptcy by the

Exchequer notice, that only the interest would be paid for 1672 on loans, whose principal was due. Even the courtiers who had seats at St. Stephen's, for very shame, tried to absent themselves; to secure a ministerial majority, Charles commanded that a heavy whip should be issued; the Court members by scores were brought from the places of evil resort, which Westminster then abounded, to vote for the Court; notwithstanding these efforts, the King's ministers were left in a minority of thirty or forty in the popular House; even thus, since the Dutch war began, nearly half a million, it was calculated, had found its way into the King's private purse; against such abuses as these, though forced upon its notice, the House made no effective protest. It did indeed expel Sir George Carteret, the King's vice-chamberlain, who had a seat at St. Stephen's and whose malversation of public monies was so gross, as to have brought him within reach of the criminal law; by way of practical apology to the Sovereign for any offence this may have given him, the Commoners voted His Majesty their thanks for the zeal for the Established Church, shown in his proclamations against dissenters, and especially in the suppression of Evangelical meeting houses.

The parliamentary tactics of Charles permanently embittered the relations between the two Houses. The differences about money Bills already have been mentioned. There occurred however a more notable quarrel than this. Sir Samuel Barnardiston was, or at one time had been, a member of the House, much liked at Westminster as chairman of the East India Company; he was a personage in the City; he was wealthy, hospitable; he had, at times of need, placed several of his brother members, for the most part country gentlemen suffering from bad seasons, under pecuniary obligations to himself. A merchant, named Skinner, had started trade on his own account in

Hindostan; the company's agents had forcibly possessed themselves of Skinner's ships, of his merchandise, and of an island he had bought from a native prince; in despair of obtaining justice from the Courts, he directly addressed to the Crown a prayer for reparation. Charles brought the matter before the Lords in their judicial capacity. They ordered the company to pay Skinner £5,000 damages. Upon Barnardiston, as the chairman of the company, and a leading House of Commons man, was concentrated the wrath of the Peers; this gentleman soon complained to the Speaker that he had been called, as a delinquent upon his knees, to the Bar of the Lords; that he had there been charged with being one of the contrivers of a scandalous libel; that, as he still kneeled, he was sentenced to pay a fine of £300 and to remain the prisoner of the Black Rod till the money was forthcoming. The estrangement between the two Chambers had long been growing in bitterness; a climax had long been expected; the quarrel was composed in the manner advised by the King that the subject should forthwith drop and not even appear in the Journals; the Royal motive had been to avert avoidable humiliation from the Peers whom Charles rightly regarded as his most indulgent friends. The honours remained with the Commons; hereafter the Lords advanced no claim to an original jurisdiction in civil suits.

Another case of conflict of rights between the two Chambers occurred some six years later; during the session, members of the Lower House were exempt from legal process; they resented their summons by the Lords, as respondents in cases of appeal; in the Shirley case where the interests of Sir John Fagg, M.P. were concerned, four counsel who had been pleading at the Bar of the Lords were apprehended by the Serjeant-at-Arms on the Speaker's warrant. Dr. Thomas Shirley had presented in the Lords an appeal in a suit against Sir John Fagg of the Lower

House. The Commons, not content with reprimanding Shirley in the manner described, arrested the lawyers, whom finally they sent to the Tower; the Lords now demanded from the governor of that prison the release of his captives; that official replied with a *non possumus;* meanwhile he would almost seem, as if by prophesy, to have considered Mr. Pickwick's advice to his friend—to shout with the biggest crowd, if there happen to be two; for the Lieutenant of the Tower, remembering the Lower House to be the stronger and more formidable, by appearing at the Bar of St. Stephen's, threw himself upon the Commons and begged for their instructions. Thus far, therefore, notwithstanding the King's grateful favour to his compliant Peers, the Commons under Charles, in two different points, strengthened themselves against the Lords; they successfully upheld the right of that House to amend money bills; they now emancipated themselves from rivalry in the matter of privilege and, at the same time, restricted the judicial powers of the other House.

Real event at St. Stephen's under the second Charles was the beginning of the party system under which the House of Commons has been organized ever since. A servile and unscrupulous ministry was watched at every turn by a vigorous and increasingly united Opposition. By degrees, the country party united its ranks; much of the political capacity; most of the political independence, as well as the growing parliamentary aptitude to be found in the nation of those who had sat in Long Parliament. Marten was in prison at Chepstow, Denzil Holles, by favour of Charles II., sat in the House of Lords. Hazelrig had died in1661. Sir Edward Dering, not the least clever, beyond doubt the most aggressively critical and unaccommodating of its rank and file, still survived as the life and soul of resistance to Charles in all matters of Church and in such points of State as happened to interest him. Dering, in fact, was among the

earliest and staunchest of clerically-minded laymen at St. Stephen's; by anticipation, he belonged to that little group which, speaking to one of his latter day members, Mr. Disraeli described as "the children of the Church." Advocating the use of the King's money necessities, as practical argument for convincing him of the wisdom of Anglican loyalty, Dering described religion as the chief honour of the nation and the traditional care of the House. Constitutional restiveness, in political harness, prevented Dering from always being relied upon by the Opposition chiefs; it was ill for these when his tongue in the House and his energy in the division lobby were used against them. Sir Thomas Lee and Mr. Garroway respectively represented the territorial and commercial elements among the Parliament men, professedly independent of the Court. As a fact, both were equally destitute of convictions, and ready to sell themselves in the best market; under the appearance and the habits of a bluff, honest, three-bottle squire, Lee concealed deep cunning, a readiness and effrontery that one never would have thought; "no man," said his friend Garroway, reflectively, "was ever yet so honest as Lee manages to appear." Yet when the Court wanted £1,200,000 to carry on the war, these sturdy patriots were prevented by no popular scruples—the one from proposing, the other from seconding, a vote for the full sum. So entirely was the Opposition taken by surprise as to cause the grant to be made unanimously. Both Garroway and Lee were known to have received the substantial thanks of the Court for their part in the transaction; the incident, however, was forgotten; they both continued to co-operate with the leaders of the Opposition as if nothing had occurred. The universal permeation of the corrupting leven of the Court did not prevent the country party from gaining substantial successes, nor the House of Commons from winning victories more memorable even than those secured

in the case of Skinner and Shirley. It compelled the King to withdraw the Indulgence Declaration, notoriously framed in favour of the Catholics. It forced through the House the Test Act for excluding Catholics from public offices of emolument.

The only effective antagonism in the Commons to the Court was organised not by the ordinary leaders of the country party, but by the force of the reaction against the measures that this party had permitted to go through the Chamber; such was an "act to prevent the dangers arising from persons disaffected to the Government"; this imposed upon all in the civil or military employ of the State a fresh oath abhorring the traitors who advocated the taking of arms against the King or his servants on any pretence whatever, or even the least alteration of Government in Church or State. Danby, then chief minister, still further emphasized the policy of passive resistance; he did not actually gag the members of either House in their debates; he frankly confessed his purpose to prevent any utterances of theirs, outside Parliament, on public affairs. These proposals were accepted unanimously by the Peers; they would have gone through the Commons but for the vigorous reinforcements which the Court party now received; this new contingent was, to the regular Opposition in the Pensionary House, what the "Boys" or the patriots, under the first Pitt, were to Walpole and the regular Whigs, or what, in our own times, the Tory malcontents of the Fourth Party, under Lord Randolph Churchill, were to the Conservative Opposition, led by Sir Stafford Northcote. At Westminster, indeed, three parties have always been a possibility, sometimes a fact; it is only in the constituencies that the number has proved unmanageable. Shaftsbury had long been attracted by his ambitions to the Court; he had never quite renounced his popular sympathies in the country; nor could his membership of the Cabal keep

him in the pay and service of the French King, once he was satisfied that Charles II. and his brother and a future successor, then Duke of York, designed nothing less than the establishment of Popery in England. Shaftsbury's manœuvres brought about the collision between the two Houses which resulted in the miscarriage of the restricted measures just named.

But the real leaders of the Opposition were men whose names, now first heard of, sound like a prophesy of statesmen and of statesmenship of a more modern and familiar sound. A Lord William Russell had been Pym's colleague at Tavistock in the Long Parliament. The more famous representative of that name, third son of the fifth Earl of Bedford, entered the House at the time of the Restoration; after a youth of fashion and frivolity, on an early marriage with Lady Rachael Wriothesley, he settled down seriously to the severest kind of parliamentary life; unlike some of those with whom he was associated, he had no sympathy with the republican ideas that, in the Long Parliament and during the Commonwealth, some of the anti-courtiers had favoured; he believed in the English monarchy; he detested the Italian Pope and his emissaries. To brilliancy of any kind, to eloquence or wit, he lacked all pretensions; his influence at St. Stephen's was due entirely to his moral character, to his undoubted honesty and to a certain good sense in political affairs that to some extent compensated a positive sluggishness of intellectual perception; he had first made his mark in the House by his speeches against the Cabal ministers generally, and in particular by his exposure of their dishonest subjection to France, their hostility to Holland, and their treatment of the English bankers who had to do with the Exchequer. With Russell, co-operated always Lord Cavendish, afterwards the first Duke of Devonshire; as a Peer's eldest son, he bore the King's train at the Restoration; hereditary sympathies

connected him with the Crown and Court; intellectually he had been trained in respect for these by a father who had imbibed the political traditions of *The Great Leviathan*, which Hobbes, while librarian at Chatsworth, was preparing to write. Cavendish shared Russell's absolute honesty, but not his tranquil temper; as a parliamentary debater he would have been more effective if he had been less emotional; in his person and in society, the graceful gallantry of Cavendish formed a contrast to the carefully acquired austerity of Russell; during a foreign tour, Cavendish mingled in the broils, long since abandoned by Russell; in one of these he received a wound which slightly scarred him throughout life. The most typical country gentleman in this group was Sir William Coventry. The most famous name politically was that of Hampden (Richard, the son of John). The two best speakers at St. Stephen's were Littleton, who exactly understood the temper of the House, and Powle. Colonel Birch, who had begun life as a carrier, could sometimes be effective on purely popular platforms. All these men were habitually inspired and instructed by Andrew Marvell, who resisted all the temptations with which rank can assail genius, to serve with pen and counsel rather than with tongue, the Opposition. The former Presbyterian leader, whose social rank had made him in youth the intimate of Charles I., when Prince of Wales—Denzil Holles, now a Peer, represented these Commoners, his friends, in the Upper House. Another noble already mentioned, had, as Sir Ashley Cooper, acted with them at St. Stephen's; when the baronet became an earl, he worked with them in his own Chamber. Sir George Saville, afterwards Lord Halifax, the wittiest, shrewdest, and most resourceful of men, belonged to the same company; as Halifax, he showed the same interest, though of a more tolerant sort, in religion that has come down to his latest descendants.

debate; the proposal, they argued, was not primarily to disinherit the Duke of York or to disqualify a man from reigning because of his religion, but to prevent the country from falling a prey to all the mischief, superstition, idolatry and confusion of a relapse into Romanism. Sir Richard Temple, for Worcestershire, in some fine-drawn criticisms, tried to show the practical effect of the measure would be to cause an interregnum with all its inconveniences upon the death of Charles. Sir Edward Seymour, already described in these pages, and though no longer in the chair still sitting at St. Stephen's, Sir Richard Graham, Colonel Legge, afterwards Lord Dartmouth, and the astute time-server, Garroway, perhaps morally the most representative member of the House, in alternate sentences denounced the Bill and complimented the Duke of York on being a true champion of English kingship.

The most noteworthy intervention in the debate was that of Sir William Jones, who, as on other occasions, so on this, displayed his power of lifting to a higher level a far from elevating as well as an embittering debate. Jones, a rare and admirable specimen of a lawyer, who, under the Stuarts, owed his professional success to no other cause than his own ability and learning, had long rejected all Court overtures. The door of promotion, as men thought, had finally closed upon him when, by one of the strokes of humourous caprice in which the King delighted, Charles astonished everyone by making this blunt, crabbed lawyer Attorney-General; out of either House, Jones, as a lawyer, had chiefly attracted notice by his persistent refusal to disbelieve the witnesses summoned in the trials of 1679, in defence of those implicated in the Popish plots. Jones for some time had thrown up his appointment; during the present discussion, he led the moderate party in its support of the Bill. Hampden, after a boisterous harangue upon its necessity, had sat down.

# CHAPTER V.

## THE LAST OF THE STUART HOUSES.

Parliamentary work between 1660 and 1685—Votes publicly printed—The Meal Tub Plot—Short sketch of Dangerfield's career—Debate on means of suppression of popery—Lord William Russell—Bill for excluding Duke of York from succession—Principal speakers on it—Sir Leoline Jenkins—Short sketch of his career—His reasons for opposing the Exclusion Bill—Other notable speakers on it—Sir William Jones-Lawrence Hyde—The Exclusion Bill in the Lords—Antagonism between Lords and Commons—The House and Judge Jeffreys—The persecution of popish lords—William Williams, the Speaker—His conduct in the Chair—The ascendancy of the Whigs—Wrangles between Crown and Commons—Transfer of the Houses to Oxford—Reappearance of the Exclusion Bill—Death of Charles II.—Charles's attempts to crush the Whigs—James II. king—Subservience of the House—James's speech at the opening of Parliament—Sir John Trevor, Speaker—Short sketch of his career—Sir Edward Seymour leader of the Tory Party—Growing resistance to James—The Standing Army question—Sir Thomas Meres and Sir Thomas Clarges—Samuel Pepys—Dissolution of Parliament—William's first declaration from the Hague.

"THIS country has been perpetually rent and torn since His Majesty's Restoration. I can compare it to nothing better than the flinging the reward upon the death of a deer among a pack of hounds, where every one pulls and tears for himself what he can." So in a letter reviewing the parliamentary course, under Charles II., to his friend in the Lower House, Harbord, wrote Lord Essex, who had consistently supported the Opposition. The general result of what had passed at St. Stephen's between 1660 and 1685, was not to undo the work of the Long Parliament, but, while apparently throwing

that work somewhat back, to assure for it in the early future the full harvest, for which the earlier labourers had looked. On October 30th, 1680, the House resolved for the first time that the votes should be publicly printed. This was the earliest step in the direction of a publicity of discussion—the logical result of the often-menaced but gradually established freedom. By the agencies of party organization at Westminster, and of popular instruction throughout the constituencies, the House had prepared itself to be not only the Sovereign administrator of the nation's affairs, but, in home and foreign policy, its chief instructor as well. Five days after this significant innovation was ordered, began the debate on the Bill for excluding the Duke of York from the succession. That controversy practically involved the first establishment of party government under the modern nomenclature in the House of Commons; the terms Whig and Tory now began to pass into common use; to the House of 1680, the Whigs had been returned in a decisive majority. The Opposition had been prevented by no scruples from exciting popular feeling against the prospect of a Popish successor, in the Duke of York, to the free-thinking Charles II. Something in the nature of Popish plots to destroy, under the future James II., the Protestant Establishment, undoubtedly existed. When they did not exist, they were manufactured. At one time by an Oates, at another, as now, by a Dangerfield. On October 26th, 1680, Dangerfield had been brought to the Bar of the Commons to explain the details of a Popish conspiracy, whose evidence, he maintained, would be found in a meal-tub in the house of a lady, subsequently tried and proved to be innocent of all complicity in the affair. Dangerfield, a versatile villain, who had run the gamut of knavish infamy, was the vilest and most characteristic product of a disturbed and scheming period; after having professed conversion to Puritanism and for some time

practised counterfeit coining, he found himself in prison with a Popish woman of dissolute life. She procured his release; afterwards she obtained for him access to the Roman Catholic Countess of Powis; hence, his acquaintance with the names of the leading members of the Catholic community; the Whig majority at St. Stephen's bore with and encouraged Dangerfield in his preposterous revelations; they employed him as a tool; when they had no further party use for him, they surrendered him to justice. The House of Commons shared in the characteristic passions of a credulous and cruel age; it welcomed the informer to its Bar at the end of October; a little later it saw him whipped at the cart-tail from Newgate to Tyburn; on his arrival at that destination, it saw the wretched man killed by the vindictive assault of a casual spectator.

The debate on the best means for the suppression of Popery followed Dangerfield's disclosures; the discussion was opened by Lord William Russell; this was the third son of the fifth Earl of Bedford. In 1660, he had been returned for Tavistock, whose representation, as has been already said, his ancestor and namesake, thirty-five years earlier, had shared with John Pym. Like his political colleague, Algernon Sidney, William Russell had been a theoretical republican; Sidney, though he had been nominated one of Charles I.'s judges, had disapproved the procedure, had truly disavowed responsibility for it, was in fact at Penshurst, when the act for the King's trial passed; Russell, in the interest of liberty itself, retrospectively condemned the proceedings which had been followed by the frantic reaction in favour of Royalty at the Restoration. Sidney placed his political views on record when he drew up for William Penn the Pennsylvanian constitution; its chief features were universal suffrage, the ballot, the abolition of property qualification, and of capital punishment, except for murder and treason, abso-

lute religious equality, and a drastic scheme of prison and penal reform that would have anticipated the labours of Howard and Romilly. The tradition of Sidney having been helped by Russell in formulating this polity is not disposed of by chronology. Whatever the fact, Sidney's written views are identical with those contained in Russell's speeches.

During the first week of the November following the day on which the House of 1680 first met, was introduced the first of the motions for disqualifying the Duke of York for the succession to his brother. The parliamentary atmosphere was still heavily charged by the malignant heats, generated by the preceding anti-popery wrangles and revelations. A private member, Colonel Titus, who seems formerly to have served under Cromwell, in a speech reflecting the religious animosities of the hour, moved for a committee to draw up a Bill for disabling James, Duke of York, from inheriting the imperial Crown of this realm. As the sequel showed, the resolution was not happily worded; it was seconded by William Russell, often, in the official journals, called Lord Russell, in an earnest but rather diffuse speech on the social miseries and political oppression ever following in the wake of Popery. Harbord followed in a more effective strain. A Popish succession meant, he argued, the organization of a Popish interest in all departments and concerns of the national life. Everyone perceived the issue of the debate to be a foregone conclusion from the moment that, amid cheers, wherein some of the King's friends involuntarily joined, Garroway, who followed Harbord and Russell, sat down. Among the country gentlemen of old descent and of ancestral Royalist sympathies who declared for the Exclusion Bill, were Sir Henry Capel, long conspicuous for the moderation of his religious ideas, Sir Francis Winnington, and the head of the ancient Cornish house of Boscawen.

The resistance to the proposal found its leader in the new

Secretary of State, who now filled the office of the dismissed Coventry. The ecclesiastical opinions of Sir Leoline Jenkins seem to have been those of Charles I. and of Laud rather than of the future James II. As a high churchman, Jenkins disliked Romanism, only less than he loathed the puritans; an Oxford undergraduate of Jesus College, during the Civil Wars, he had followed its other members in declaring for the King from the moment that the Royal Standard floated over the Isis; the college itself had been dismantled and turned into a barrack; it remained to the last the headquarters of Lord Herbert and other Welsh gentlemen who ranged themselves on the King's side. Jenkins, a scholar of high attainments, remained an active politician till the Royalist cause became hopeless; under the Commonwealth, he had been a tutor of well-born Royalist youth, sometimes in England, sometimes abroad. In 1660, he resettled himself at Oxford, first as fellow, then as principal of his old college; he next served on Sir William Temple's embassy to Nimeguen; he afterwards succeeded his chief as minister at the Hague; finally returning to England, he was sent to St. Stephen's by his university as one of its representatives. The great point made by Jenkins against the Exclusion Bill, was that it violated the oath of allegiance, binding all the subjects to Charles and to his legal successors; it further changed the essence of the monarchy and made the Crown elective; for if one Parliament might disinherit a prince for religion, another might do so on some other pretence, till, by a series of such exclusions, it would claim to choose whom it pleased; to such matters the legislative supremacy of the Houses did not extend. To regulate the succession altogether lay beyond them. To rob a man, still less a prince, of his birthright, was a principle new indeed to Parliament or to the country. One, if not two sons of John Hampden, then representing Buckingham, spoke for the first time during this

debate; the proposal, they argued, was not primarily to disinherit the Duke of York or to disqualify a man from reigning because of his religion, but to prevent the country from falling a prey to all the mischief, superstition, idolatry and confusion of a relapse into Romanism. Sir Richard Temple, for Worcestershire, in some fine-drawn criticisms, tried to show the practical effect of the measure would be to cause an interregnum with all its inconveniences upon the death of Charles. Sir Edward Seymour, already described in these pages, and though no longer in the chair still sitting at St. Stephen's, Sir Richard Graham, Colonel Legge, afterwards Lord Dartmouth, and the astute time-server, Garroway, perhaps morally the most representative member of the House, in alternate sentences denounced the Bill and complimented the Duke of York on being a true champion of English kingship.

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passed in a series of wrangles over questions of money, of religion, of prorogation or dissolution, between Crown and Commons. The chief of these was the discussion of funds for the siege of Tangier. The Whigs refused the supply till the King should give guarantees for incorrupt justice in his courts, and liberty in religious matters. The public spirit of the nation and the ability of the anti-courtiers at St. Stephen's, had sunk to a point unprecedentedly low. Charles eventually was victorious along the whole line. The representative Chamber was subjected to successive forms of fatal corruption; the strength of the Tories lay in the counties, that of the Whigs, in the boroughs. These latter constituencies it was now necessary to doctor; by the *Quo Warranto* writs, suggested by Judge Saunders in 1682, the corporations that supplied the town voters were transformed into Tory bodies. A strong Court majority at St. Stephen's followed. So far as concerned the King, the work of the Long Parliament against Charles I. seemed hopelessly undone. Charles II., in fact, had completely worsted the House by securing a standing army for the Crown by filling the bench with his own nominees and by returning only his own creatures to St. Stephen's.

The monotony of the degradation at St. Stephen's during the last years of Charles II. was broken by the transfer of the Houses to Oxford in 1681. First entered the King with a military body-guard and an immense train of followers. Afterwards followed the Opposition members, with like demonstrations of their own; each Whig member was surrounded by a deputation of his constituents as a defence against the Popish soldiers of the Sovereign; once more the electors of London City conspicuously identified themselves with the popular cause; their members were attended to the banks of the Isis by a troop of horse, decked with ribbons and banners, emblazoned by devices denouncing tyrants and

the Lower, George Saville, now Lord Halifax, and Sir Ashley Cooper, now Lord Shaftsbury; the dimensions of the majority that threw out the measure were due to the consummate tact and extraordinary ability of Halifax, whose speech, before it had advanced midway, really disposed of the whole matter.

This collision between the two Chambers forms an era in the traditional antagonism of the two, often suppressed, more frequently composed by concession or compromise; but always ready to break out with a vehemence, displayed during these closing years of the seventeenth century. On Halifax especially was concentrated the wrath of the Commons; their anger against him soon displayed itself after the old illogical and extreme fashion; they voted an address to the King to remove Halifax from his councils; in doing this, the Commons in effect refused to the Peers the freedom of speech they always claimed for themselves. One of their own body, Sir Robert Peyton, was expelled by them because he had palliated the conduct of the Peers; yet these tyrants in a majority were the men who had recently denounced the Upper House for committing to the Tower four Peers who had criticised the legality of some of its transactions. Presently the Lower House was to try its strength against one who did not passively bow to its omnipotence; an Irishman, named Sheridon, had been committed by the Commons for disrespectful language; he at once sued for his habeas corpus; some of the judges nervously absented themselves from the bench. Baron Weston remained, and dared to allow Sheridon's prayer. The Commons retaliated by a resolution to impeach the intrepid judge.

The sanguinary temper roused in the Commons by the Exclusion Bill was to find an early opportunity for glutting itself. On November 13th, the House joined in the hue and cry, already raised by the City, against Sir George Jeffreys,

who, in the next reign, was to earn an immortality of infamy. Jeffreys was charged by the House with thwarting and obstructing the popular right of parliamentary petition; the King was therefore prayed to remove him from public employments; as a fact, Jeffreys became Chief Justice of the King's Bench two years before Charles II. died. But the victims, specially to the taste of the House, were theological. The character of Lord Stafford had little about it that could be called admirable; his nerve and intellect had alike been weakened by a dissipated youth; of the five Peers who lay in the Tower, under a charge of Popish conspiracy, Stafford seems to have been chosen by the Commons for doing to death, from a hope that his feebleness, constitutional or acquired, might induce him to make a bid for safety by incriminating his accomplices. In their eagerness to hunt down real or imaginary Papists, the Commons were not only supported but even outdone by the Church; respectable ecclesiastics, like Barlow, Burnet, Sancroft, Sharp, Stillingfleet, Tillotson, all vied with the people's representatives in their clamorous accusations, not only of conspiracy, but of having caused the Great Fire of London and even the death of Charles I., now brought against the spiritual subjects of the Pope. The chair of the House of Commons was now filled by a Welsh member, William Williams, who succeeded in degrading his office to a lower depth than any of his predecessors had found possible. Upon every occasion he refused even the attempt to exercise a moderating influence; he hounded the House on to its worst excesses; when its victims were fairly under his foot, he addressed them in language as coarse and brutal as was ever afterwards used by Jeffreys himself on his Bloody Assize; he showed a ferocious exultation, alike in terrifying the wretched nobleman, the feeble and infirm Stafford, already sinking into the grave under the weight of years, and in language whose foulness was all his

own, aggravating the sentence of expulsion on Sir Robert Peyton from the Assembly. Speaker Williams made no pretence of preserving order; he lost no chance of inciting an excited and demoralised House to fresh excesses; one of the vile witnesses at the Bar swore that Stafford had proposed the murder of the King; the members burst forth into a roar of savage applause; with flaming face and hoarse voice, amid frequent oaths, Williams led the cheers. A later Whig, Charles Fox himself, narrating these incidents, reflects with shame that with these odious cries may have been mingled the voices of men not unworthy of respect as friends of liberty. As for the Upper House, so far from moderating the violence of the Lower by larger majorities, it hurried Stafford and other wretches to their doom.

So, in both Chambers, did the Whigs begin their long period of ascendency. In their lust for blood, the Commons would have robbed the King of his constitutional right to mitigate some of the horrors in the punishment of treason, on the ground that the right to reduce or commute the penalty involved that of remitting it altogether; this, in the case of Danby, the House had expressly denied to Charles. The very men who had contended against the dispensing power of the King, now claimed that authority for themselves; an Act of the 35th Elizabeth punished by a fine of £20 all absentees from their parish church; the statute was, of course, directed against Papists. Charles had enforced it against Protestant nonconformists. The Commons proceeded to cancel it; the repealing measure was sent up to the Lords, whose debates the King was in the habit of attending, walking up and down with his hands in his pockets and chatting with his friends. On one of these occasions, Charles, not wishing the repeal to pass, but afraid to reject it, took it off the table so as to stop the whole proceeding.

The remaining period in the House under this King was

passed in a series of wrangles over questions of money, of religion, of prorogation or dissolution, between Crown and Commons. The chief of these was the discussion of funds for the siege of Tangier. The Whigs refused the supply till the King should give guarantees for incorrupt justice in his courts, and liberty in religious matters. The public spirit of the nation and the ability of the anti-courtiers at St. Stephen's, had sunk to a point unprecedentedly low. Charles eventually was victorious along the whole line. The representative Chamber was subjected to successive forms of fatal corruption; the strength of the Tories lay in the counties, that of the Whigs, in the boroughs. These latter constituencies it was now necessary to doctor; by the *Quo Warranto* writs, suggested by Judge Saunders in 1682, the corporations that supplied the town voters were transformed into Tory bodies. A strong Court majority at St. Stephen's followed. So far as concerned the King, the work of the Long Parliament against Charles I. seemed hopelessly undone. Charles II., in fact, had completely worsted the House by securing a standing army for the Crown by filling the bench with his own nominees and by returning only his own creatures to St. Stephen's.

The monotony of the degradation at St. Stephen's during the last years of Charles II. was broken by the transfer of the Houses to Oxford in 1681. First entered the King with a military body-guard and an immense train of followers. Afterwards followed the Opposition members, with like demonstrations of their own; each Whig member was surrounded by a deputation of his constituents as a defence against the Popish soldiers of the Sovereign; once more the electors of London City conspicuously identified themselves with the popular cause; their members were attended to the banks of the Isis by a troop of horse, decked with ribbons and banners, emblazoned by devices denouncing tyrants and

Papists. The King was now willing to settle the questions raised by the Exclusion Bill by a compromise; the Duke of York should succeed by the title of James II. on the condition that his reign should be one protracted regency, undertaken by the Prince of Orange and his wife. The original Exclusion Bill, however, reappeared; in the debates which followed its supporters in the House—Birch, Capel, the Hampdens, Jones, Russell, and Winnington—were as bitter against the regency suggestion as they had been against the prospect of a Papist on the Throne.

And now the new era, on which the representative Chamber and the country were to enter, visibly and suddenly approached. Four years after he had met his Oxford House of Commons in the Examination Schools; two years after the Whigs in the House were weakened by the executions of Russell and Sidney; without any warning, the King was smitten by a fatal stroke of apoplexy.

The organization at St. Stephen's of party government, as it has since been understood, was the chief work accomplished in the House of Commons during the first reign after the Restoration. The political dualism, which has continued ever since, had no sooner been instituted in its modern shape than one of the elements in the system seemed to be finally eliminated. Charles II. had used all his own periodical popularity, as well as all the resources of his unscrupulous astuteness, to crush the Whigs, by whatever name they might be called—the Country Party, Exclusionists, or Petitioners—in the House of Commons. The King and his mouthpieces in Parliament or Press had identified the leaders of the Opposition to the Court with Republicans and Levellers. Among all the Opposition members charged with complicity in the Rye House Plot, or in other subversive movements of the time, was none who could not on his death adduce evidence that he had never intended to alter the form of government. At the

time of the King's death, these politicians, however, were suffering the extreme of weakness and discredit. Whatever of patriotic or Protestant enthusiasm the Exclusion Bill debates had excited had completely collapsed. The Catholic Duke of York, by the style of James II., mounted the Throne, not only without opposition, but without a single protesting voice making itself heard. While the new King's ministry was being formed, with Rochester as its chief, his brother Clarendon as Privy Seal, and Godolphin as Grand Chamberlain to the Queen, the Sovereign himself took a pleasure in scandalising the popular House by ostentatiously perpetuating for himself the relations with the French King, established by his brother. In the House itself, these flagrantly notorious transactions elicited no criticism or even comment. At his first council, James had declared his resolution to support the Established religion. The Commons tendered their obsequious thanks, and passed on to the business of the day. The revenue of Charles ended with his life. Without waiting for a vote of the Lower House, James issued a proclamation ordering its continuance for himself. This was, of course, against the letter and the practice of constitutional law. But the national temper was still what it had been five years earlier; then the petitions, urging Charles to convene the House to carry the Exclusion Bill, were out-numbered by the addresses of those abhorring the measure; hence the division into Petitioners and Abhorrers, afterwards superseded by Whigs and Tories.

Three months later, May 22nd, 1680, the House of Commons met. In his opening speech the King reiterated the assurances already given to his council, that he would preserve the government, both in Church and State, as now by law established, and that he would never invade the liberty or property of his subjects. The Chamber, popular now only in name, had become, under the Speakership of Sir John Trevor,

the tool of the Court. It still numbered among its members men who bore the names suggestive of parliamentary freedom. Sir Edward Seymour, suggested as Speaker for the third time, had been rejected by Charles II. in favour of Serjeant Gregory. In the Oxford House of Commons Speaker William Williams took the chair without, in effect, submitting himself to the Royal pleasure at all. Sir John Trevor first took the chair in 1685; his one qualification for the office was his readiness to serve the Crown, to bribe or threaten the House into doing the same. As First Commissioner of the Great Seal he had proved his fitness for that work. From the first a Tory, he received from the Court large sums to buy those whom he could not bully into voting for the Crown. Trevor's rise had been remarkable; an ill-looking lad, with what was called Satanic squint, kept the door of a low-class lawyer's office; his employer apologetically explained of him, "He is set there to learn the knavish part of the law." He showed his earlier proficiency in deciding the disputes of local gamblers; he then sneaked into St. Stephen's as member for a Court borough; exactly thirty years after the squinting urchin had kept the lawyer's door, he sat in the Speaker's chair; in the next reign, when that style became his by Statute, as the first Commoner of England, and the greatest gentleman of the realm, he took his place in the retinue of William III. and Mary. Within a week, however, of that event, he had to read aloud in the House its resolution, that Sir John Trevor, Speaker, for receiving a gratuity of one thousand guineas from the City of London, was guilty of high crime and misdemeanour.

The House, of course, consistently showed itself such as, under such chairmanship, it might have been expected. Its first act was, without opposition or discussion, to confirm all the late King's revenue to his successor. Sir Edward Seymour, as hereditary Royalist leader of the Tory party, had

opposed the Exclusion Bill; he had generally abetted the second Charles in all his despotic designs; he does not now seem to have resisted the Royal revenue vote; he did, however, question or deny the competence of the first House of James to transact any business whatever; "First," he said, "let us ascertain who of us have been duly elected members, and who are merely the King's nominees." The Crown's religious opinions and resolution to maintain a standing army of its own left Seymour, as a supporter of the Constitution, no alternative but to offer to the last Stuart the same opposition which the barons had showed to the Plantagenets. As a whole, however, the House continued to the last obsequious towards James. Mr. John Coke was testified by his brother members to be a gentleman of great loyalty; he was also a new member on the Tory side. But, in reply to a menacing message to the House from the King, he protested the Commons were not to be frighted out of their duty by a few high words. The reception at once given to the remark showed him the mistake he had made; he stammered out an apology to the House and to the King; it only elicited the cry, "Send him to the Tower." Thither, accordingly, by Speaker's warrant, he was dispatched; he congratulated himself on escaping the pillory and the cart-tail.

In the June of 1685, the Duke of Monmouth had landed in England, and issued a declaration as King. About a month later his cause had been disposed of at Sedgemoor. The House voted a bill of attainder against the defeated invader, as well as a measure for ensuring the inviolability of the sacred person of James. These resolutions, however, did not imply any relaxation of the resolve to maintain the Protestant religion, and to prevent the King, by a standing army, making himself independent of the House.

That question heralded the final overthrow of the Stuart monarchy; it presented a clear issue between King and Com-

mons. Sir Thomas Meres and Sir Thomas Clarges were neither of them partisans. If, at one time, ranked in the Country Party, they both seemed to have wished to stand well with the Court. They thus fairly represented a widespread feeling in a corrupt Assembly. Neither could admit the contention of James that the militia needed the supplement of fresh and permanent troops for the Royal safety; Seymour led the country gentlemen in the resistance to the addition. The debate covered a wide range of cognate subjects, indeed the whole area of national defence by sea as well as land; it was noticeable, among other things, for the part taken in it by a comparatively new member, whose whimsical manner amused, but whose official experience and knowledge really instructed the House. This was the future diarist, Samuel Pepys, who, after long service and good work at the Admiralty, as well as in other departments, had taken his seat at St. Stephen's. Eventually the King obtained the money he wanted; he then dissolved the House; the new Parliament was to meet in the following September. But the elections were not proceeded with, because the Prince of Orange was known to have accepted the invitation addressed to him from both parties. Before the day fixed for the reassembling of the Houses (November 27th), the Prince of Orange had issued (October 10th, 1688) his first declaration from the Hague.

# CHAPTER VI.

## THE HOUSE AND THE REVOLUTION.

The Bill of Rights—Henry Powle—Prominent in procuring the cancelling of the Declaration of Indulgence—Differences between Powle and Seymour—The House without a Chairman on account of refusal of Charles II. to confirm election of Seymour—Powle first Speaker under William III.—Resemblance between William's first Parliament and the Long Parliament—Prominent men in this Parliament—John Somers—His career—His appreciation of genius—His Parliamentary work—Debate on the succession to the Throne—Somers's speech in it—Sir Robert Howard follows Somers—Pollexfen in the debate—Faughan the only member to speak for James—Proclamation of William and Mary — William's new ministers — Parliamentary trivialities discussed — Faughan and Sir H. Monson refuse to take oath of allegiance—They are expelled—Members of the House promoted to high position—Biographical notice of Godolphin—Godolphin's political friends—High character of Sacheverel—Early debates in the new reign—Financial discussions—The Mutiny Act—Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act—Matthew Prior and Montague—Early life—Prior minister at the Hague—Montague, First Lord—Thomas Wharton—A supporter of the Exclusion Bill—His election at Newport—The Speaker "first commoner in the realm"—Sir John Trevor the first to enjoy that distinction—The King's ministers from being servants of the Crown gradually become servants of the House.

THE events happening between the second and successful attempt of James II. to leave the kingdom, and a recognition of William and Mary as the reigning power are too familiar to require more than the very briefest recapitulation here. The abortive meeting at Hungerford of the commissioners for James and William took place December 8th, 1688. William's declaration to the English people, stating the

reasons for his acceptance of the invitation, was dated at the Hague, October 16th. The fifth of next month witnessed his landing at Torbay; three days after a rising against James had broken out in the north of England. Sir Edward Seymour at once finally severed himself from James and declared for the invader. William's first act on reaching London, December 19th, was to call together the Peers and the surviving members of Charles II.'s House of Commons. These recommended a convention. That body met January 22nd, 1689; it decided to settle the Throne on William and Mary, all executive power being vested in the new King. At 10 o'clock on the morning of February 13th, the members of the convention who had sat in the House of Commons with their Speaker, Henry Powle, on the left side of the Westminster banqueting house, met the Prince and Princess of Orange. The Presidents of the two Chambers then presented to their two Sovereigns elect the famous document, known as the Declaration of Rights, afterwards turned into the Bill of Rights. That instrument brought to a close the struggle of just sixty-three years' duration between the Crown and the Commons. Having enumerated the chief offences of James II., the declaration specified the following as illegal—the dispensing power assumed by James, the court of ecclesiastical commission as revived by James, the raising of money without a parliamentary grant, the maintenance in time of peace of a standing army without parliamentary consent. It was further stipulated that all subjects had a right to petition the Crown, that parliamentary elections must be free and incorrupt, that parliamentary debates must not be interfered with by any person, and were beyond the control of any public court whatever, that, for the redress of grievances, and the strengthening of laws, Parliaments must be held frequently. As to the Crown and the succession to it, William and Mary, it was said, were now King and Queen of England. Papists,

or those who had married a Papist, were disqualified from inheriting the Crown which was to go to the children, if any, of William and Mary, or to Mary's sister, the Princess Anne, and to her children, unless indeed William should have children by any other queen than Mary. Such was the seventeenth century charter of St. Stephen's; it substituted the will of the House for the will of the Crown, as the guiding force in national policy; it made, in the last resort, the succession to the Crown a matter of compact between its wearer and the people represented at Westminster.

The leading spirit on the popular side in the House of 1675, under Charles II., had by the best judges been recognised in Henry Powle, then M.P. for Cirencester, famous for his mastery of parliamentary precedents, not an affluent or ready orator, but capable of putting strong thoughts into clear English. The chief offence given to Charles II. by Powle, had been with respect to the Declaration of Indulgence; this, he had said, would suspend at once forty Acts of Parliament; on this, the House voted that such suspension was unconstitutional. On the King's persisting, the Commons, under Powle, remained resolute, with the result that the Declaration of Indulgence was cancelled by the King in his own hand. Between Powle and the then Speaker of the House, Edward Seymour, a noteworthy difference had arisen over an address of the House, advising an alliance with Holland. Charles sharply replied that the Commons were invading his prerogative, that, were he to yield, he would be but the empty sound of a King, and that the Lower House should at once return to St. Stephen's for the purpose of adjournment; at St. Stephen's, Powle tried to resume the debate and to prevent Speaker Seymour from leaving the House with the mace. Not indeed that Seymour was more subservient to the Crown than Powle himself; for Seymour it was, who, when voted to the Chair, abruptly presented himself to the King for his

approbation, "which, if your Majesty please to grant, I shall do the Commons and you the best service I can"; Charles disallowed Seymour's election; Powle led the complaint against so unprecedented a course—only, he said, to be excused in the case of some physical disability, as formerly with Sir John Popham, and more recently with Sir Job Charlton; whereas Seymour's physique had no weakness. For some time after this, the House conducted its sittings without any chairman. That state of things was quaintly compared by one of the members to "playing French cockles," whatever that might be. An intermediary between the Crown and the Commons suggested for the Chair Serjeant Gregory, who was accepted by the House and approved by the King; the Commons consequently were taunted at the time and afterwards with having surrendered the unconditional choice of their chairman. Throughout this and other such episodes, Powle acted as spokesman of the House.

The high opinion of Powle's political judgment held by the first authorities of the day may be seen from the fact that, after the fall of Danby, before communicating his ideas to Charles II., Sir William Temple consulted Powle as to his plan for harmonising the relations between the Popular Assembly and the Crown; Temple's notion was a new privy council, consisting of thirty members, half to be nominees of the Crown, the other, chosen from the Opposition in both Houses. The only qualification for these advisers was to be money. Powle's criticism was that such a timocracy had never yet succeeded, and that the Court and country livery ill-matched together.

Apart, therefore, from his political sympathies with the Whig majority, which had given the Crown to the Prince of Orange, Powle's independence, experience of, and aptitude for, great affairs, moderation and impartiality, pre-eminently fitted him to be the first Speaker in a reign which symbolised

the historic fact that henceforth in the national policy the decisive voice would be that heard in St. Stephen's chapel, not in Whitehall Palace. The one subject of regret among some of Powle's supporters seems to have been that his situation as chairman would prevent him from taking part in the debates, as he had shown himself well qualified to do; Powle, in fact, seems to have been one of the few members, who, before the days of reporting, hit upon phrases that remain throughout the session the talk and admiration of the House; his attack upon Chief Justice Scroggs passed at the time of its delivery for a masterpiece of patriotic invective.

The House over which Speaker Powle presided presented a marked contrast to the venal and invertebrate Assemblies which had met to register the decrees and to fulfil the pleasure of the second Charles and James. The House that met January 22nd, 1689, was the most notable that had assembled since the Long Parliament of 1640; it was also of something like the same political complexion; the prevailing colour and the most active members were conspicuously and aggressively Whig. The Long Parliament itself seemed to have risen from the dead. Once more were there an Hampden from Buckinghamshire, a Bedfordshire descendant of the Russell who had shared with Pym the representation of Tavistock, and the self-same Maynard who, nearly half a century earlier, had conducted part of the proceedings against Strafford; natural under the circumstances seems William III.'s remark to this venerable Whig member. The conversation between William III. and Maynard, containing the words now referred to, will be found at its proper place on an earlier page. With these survivors of the old régime were mingled apt representatives of the new; Dolben, son of a former Archbishop of York, brought to St. Stephen's a brilliant school and college reputation, readiness of speech, and clearness of head. With him was Wharton, the eldest

son of the Peer of that name and title. Both of these men had trained themselves to political life in the ranks of the Country Party at St. Stephen's under James II.; Wharton, among persons of social consideration, had, like Dolben, been among the earliest adherents of the Orange Prince. But the most important member, as he may be called, the leader of the seventeenth century Whigs in the House of Commons is yet to be mentioned.

The maiden speech of the member for Worcester, John Somers, was delivered in the Convention House during the debates on the state of the nation that came between the flight of James and the actual beginning of his successor's reign. Somers is the first instance of a politician of humble birth, by dint of sheer ability, rising to the leadership of a pre-eminently aristocratic party. The second James had offended the Protestantism of all classes alike. He had scandalised and alienated the friends, high and low, of constitutional Government. But without the vigorous initiative first and the practical support afterwards of the old political families, many of which were courtiers, the Prince of Orange would never have mounted the throne as William III. No member of the Convention House held Whiggery and all its works in greater abhorrence, than did Sir Christopher Musgrave, the highest of high Tories; neither loyalty to the reigning Stuart nor to the essential prerogatives of English monarchy could prevent the dismissal of himself and of others like him by James; for the oldest and staunchest Tories of that time combined the Anglican principles of Laud with the traditional dislike of militarism and of a standing army, characteristic of the House and of the country. Musgrave, therefore, not less than Clarges, Treby, and many other descendants of old families sat in the Chamber of 1688-89 as supporters of the new dynasty and of its ministers. Of this socially patrician, politically enlightened group, not by his

own ambition, but by his endowments of mind, the son of a Worcester attorney was being promoted to a position of leadership. From a private school in Staffordshire, John Somers had won a scholarship at Trinity, Oxford. Called to the Bar at the Middle Temple, he soon reached the first rank of his profession; in 1683, he had been counsel for Grey, Pilkington and others, charged with inciting riots against the Court; in 1688 he had defended the Seven Bishops. When, therefore, he entered the House, he brought with him a great reputation. He had not been a session at St. Stephen's before he astounded the House by his wealth of ideas and wisdom, as well as of words, by a quickness of perception and judgment, tempered with prudence and common sense. The praise of these qualities was not denied him by his bitterest opponents. At a later date, his discriminating patronage raised Locke to comfort or wealth, encouraged Addison to exchange his cloister for the service of the State. On the other side in politics, he showed the same desire to give genius or merit a fair chance. The embittered non-juror, Hicks, owed to Somers the opportunities of studying Teutonic archæology, in which he afterwards became so great an authority. The Roman Catholic Vertue obtained from Somers the help which placed him among the masters of English engraving. As a scholar and connoisseur, he had few rivals; he had never travelled; his correct judgment on Italian works of art seemed an instinct of genius. In philology, he anticipated several among the conclusions of a more scientific age than his own. Somers had of course his personal detractors; without the shadow of foundation, a lampooner depicted him as the most profligate libertine of his day; on the other hand, Swift, though in his Tory period, declared Somers to be not only the most accomplished, but the most virtuous of men.

In the first of the great debates of the Convention House,

Somers showed his power of redeeming a discussion from trivialities or platitudes, and of elevating its tone by introducing into it a new spirit and fresh knowledge. Sir George Treby had made some fresh and pertinent remarks on the results to William from the flight of James II. The ex-Speaker, William Williams, who had left the Whigs to become the tool of James, was now anxious to put himself right with the *de facto* King. Somers followed with a luminous, learned and animated description of a constitutional position; his chief point was a parallel between the English case and that of the Swedish King, Sigismund, who broke the agreement into which he had entered with his subjects, and whose retirement to Poland was declared by the Swedes to have vacated the Throne. The result was the election of Charles VIII. to the Swedish Crown. The incident excited great interest throughout Europe; it must, Somers declared, have prepared the mind of the world to acquiesce in the legality of what England was now doing.

Sir Robert Howard, already mentioned as among the most notable of private members, during several sessions had scarcely been heard. Uncharitable critics said he was waiting decisively to see how the wind blew; he had now taken his place among the Whigs. In the present debate he followed Somers with a speech, often referred to afterwards as containing an epitome of plain Whig principles. Not till then had been formulated in the House the Whig doctrine, that the essence of the English polity was a pact and covenant between King and people. The chief Whig lawyer of the period, Pollexfen, assumed what common sense, as well as the whole course of the debate had already made clear, that the Throne was actually vacant; it was for the House to fill it. But one voice was lifted up on behalf of James—that of Fanshaw, nearly the one courtier who had stood by his King; the flight of James was involuntary, he said; therefore, he

moved the adjournment of the debate. The mind of St. Stephen's was already fixed; a division was at once taken; this declared the late Sovereign, by his violation of fundamental laws and by his withdrawal from the realm, to have abdicated. A descendant of John Hampden carried up the resolution to the Lords; in what yet remained to be done the Lower House, at each stage, took the initiative; the only good speeches were made in the Upper. On February 13th, 1689, the votes and debates of the representative Chamber found their final expression in the proclamation of William and Mary as King and Queen, of the Princess Anne, as, in default of directly Royal issue, heir to the Crown. Shortly after this, the House found itself listening to the names of the new King's councillors and ministers. These testified the completeness of its triumph by including as they did Mr. Sidney, brother of Algernon, through whom had been conducted the correspondence that gave the Crown to the Prince of Orange. This member of a famous family had many amiable and popular qualities; otherwise he was without any strongly defined characteristics. The Convention had now become a Parliament. The February session of 1689 opened with the first speech from the newly filled Throne. The merest of parliamentary trivialities was the first incident of the session to excite any interest. For the first time was now heard the applausive cry of "Hear him," which preceded the "Hear, hear" of later times. The Tory Sir Edward Seymour objected to this form of interruption. The Whig Sir Henry Capel replied in some animated remarks, showing the interjection complained of to have been employed before now by Seymour himself, or at least when he was in the Chair. Another scene of some interest occurred when Fanshaw and Sir Henry Monson refused to swear allegiance to the new dynasty. Many of their brother members volunteered testimonies to the moral virtues of the political dissentients.

Mr. Leveson-Gower (a name now first becoming prominent at St. Stephen's) pleaded for time for consideration; the House refused to wait. Both the non-juring M.Ps. were promptly and unanimously expelled. Generally, however, the compliments paid to the Commons by promoting its members to high office—Sir George Treby to be Attorney-General, Somers to be Solicitor—had placed and kept it in a good humour. If it had ever cherished republican convictions, the Assembly showed none of the courage which these might have inspired. One after another, the old Whig leaders rose up to protest against anything of the sort; each and all of the suspects would rather lose their heads than have a hand in anything to upset the monarchy.

Among those ministers of the new King, whose names were or had been distinguished in House of Commons' history, must be mentioned Godolphin, now a Peer and head of the Treasury Board, but who, before his elevation, had been since 1668 an active member of the Lower House. Born of an old Cornish family, settled near Helston, he had from childhood been brought up at the Court of the second Charles; he seemed to reproduce in himself that Prince's easy pleasure-loving temper. The Godolphin Arab is still remembered in the history of horse-breeding; he liked all forms of gambling—on the turf, because he loved horses, in society, because he disliked talking, and because, if a man did not lose his money at faro, he must fatigue his tongue with chatter. The official group, headed by Godolphin, comprised also Sir Michael Wharton, Sir Thomas Lee, Sir John Lowther of Whitehaven, Sir John Chichele, and William Sacheverel—all of them interesting if not eminent personages at St. Stephen's. The last of these was a type of those country gentlemen, who, without any special business training, have seldom failed in the conduct of the national business. Sacheverel, nominated to the Admiralty by the King, had

begged to be excused on the ground of his absolute ignorance of nautical affairs; the Sovereign made light of these scruples, because the State wanted, not the experience of the specialist, but the common sense of an honest man. Sacheverel allowed himself to be persuaded, but insisted on refusing a salary. Shrewsbury may be considered the chief of this administration; his methods of doing business with the King were those which his master begged him to impress upon his colleagues in the Lower House; the gentlemen of that Assembly had struck William as using too many words. Shrewsbury's modest reserve suited him exactly; what the King wished was to have the general state of affairs laid before him, without being pressed too much.

The early debates in the new reign of the popular Chamber presented little of interest or importance. The ringleaders were confronted by a feeble and fitful Opposition, always disorganized and generally half-hearted. The Tory leaders in the House supported William in his resentment at a revenue voted the Crown not for life but annually. The Whigs held their own; after two years, having established this drastic principle of control over the Royal purse, they agreed with the other side to grant William a civil list for life. They rendered a service, not less important, during the debates on expenditure which followed. The King's allowance for the support of his own State, was separated from the grants made for the public administration of affairs. In the face of Tory resistance, the Whig leaders carried their proposals for allotting to each department of the public service its own money vote. The first session of William III.'s earliest House of Commons was drawing to its close, before it transacted its most important piece of legislation. Lord Dumbarton's regiment had mutinied; not without difficulty it was reduced to obedience. Harboard, member for Launceston, drew attention to the subject in a speech worthy of notice, because

it led to the passing for the first time of the Annual Mutiny Bill. That measure recorded the traditional jealousy, on the part of the House, of a standing army; the sentiment was indeed as old as the Assembly itself; it was as keen and restless under the Orange ruler as it had been under any of his Stuart predecessors, or as it was to show itself when the early Georges irritated popular feeling by the importation of their Hessian bodyguard. The House only agreed to consider the Mutiny Bill when it had been prefaced by an expressed declaration that the English law recognised neither standing armies nor martial courts. Inasmuch as the State was now threatened by exceptional dangers, the Commons now resolved, without a single division and for the most part in silence, that no soldier in the Crown's pay should desert the colours or refuse to obey his commander without exposing himself to the penalty of death, or such lighter punishment as a court-martial should ordain. The statute was to be in force for six months only; many, who supported it, believed that it would then not be renewed. The third reading was only secured by the acceptance of a clause that no court-martial should pass sentence of death, save between the hours of 6 a.m. and 1 p.m. After the early dinner hour, then universal, the Commons shrewdly suspected that no gentleman of the army would be in a state in which he could safely be entrusted with the power of life and death. Within the same week that introduced the first Mutiny Bill was decided another expedient, necessitated by the national disquiet. By one of the ironies of fate it was reserved for the son of John Hampden, who was one of William's secretaries of State, to acquaint the House with the Royal pleasure that the Habeas Corpus Act should be suspended. With the flight of James, and during the interregnum which had followed, the whole machinery of law and justice was at a standstill. Now the courts were resuming their functions. A host of prisoners,

detained on the charge of plotting for a Stuart Restoration, would either have to be tried at once or to be set at liberty. Either alternative would have involved inconvenience, perhaps danger. The executive was therefore empowered by statute to detain a short time longer in custody certain persons, reasonably suspected of designs against the Government. If this were a menace to popular freedom, the House of Commons connived at it as fully as they had acquiesced in the usurpations of the two last Stuarts. The popular voice, heard in taverns and marts, or wherever men congregated, echoed in the press, alone protested against the infringement upon the birthright of Britons. The Bill encountered no real resistance in either Chamber. In the Commons, the independent members, most of whom had a grudge against the Government, such as Edward Seymour, Sir William Williams, Sir Richard Temple, Sir Robert Howard and Sir Thomas Lee, uttered criticisms that were known to be bids for office, and were consequently disregarded.

In the last half of the seventeenth century, two boys of social antecedents, widely opposite, but resembling each other in their ambition, perseverance, ability and energy, were going through the classes at Westminster school. They were nearly of the same age. The slightly elder of the two, a grandson of the parliamentary general, the Earl of Manchester, bore in his face the high nose and other features typical of a patrician stock. His class mate and junior, the son of a vintner, who, during his holidays, served in his father's shop and kept the books at his bar, had a pleasant, open, intelligent countenance. This was Matthew Prior, the poet, who did not enter the House of Commons, at least till quite the end of William's time. When Prior got to St. Stephen's he found that his friend Montague had, for some time, established himself as the leading power of the place, and one of the chief directors of the Whigs. Political differ-

ences did not interfere with their private friendship. While Prior, as Tory minister at the Hague, could describe himself as dividing his Saturday holidays between bobbing for perch and boozing with a friend, or with a volume of Horace over a tankard and a pipe, Montague, by the severest life and application to public duties, had been preparing himself at Westminster to become the most useful and distinguished of State officials. At thirty-seven, Montague was first Lord of the Treasury, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and, since Somers had left it, incomparably the leading member of the House of Commons. No one, indeed, did more than Montague to confirm the position of his Chamber as the real centre, to which all departments of State converged, and as the body to which he who aspired to rule the nation must belong.

Associated with Montague at St. Stephen's was another Whig, whose name has been already mentioned, Thomas Wharton. Wharton, on the Whig side, achieved the same sort of reputation for libertinism as had been won among the cavaliers and the Tories by Thomas Wentworth, Lord Strafford, or Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke; Wharton, as a supporter of the Exclusion Bill, had been opposed by the Court through its agent Jeffreys, who personally canvassed the county for the Tory candidate, Hacket. It had been given out that the polling would take place at Aylesbury. At the eleventh hour it was transferred to Newport; when they reached that place, the night before the poll opened, the Whig voters could secure neither lodging nor food. The Tories had bought up every house and stable in the district. The difficulty did not disconcert Wharton; at a cost of £1,500 a day, he provided abundant accommodation for man and beast in the open fields. He was himself brought in at the head of the poll; he also brought in on his back his colleague with flying colours against the intimidation of the Chief Justice and the corruption of the Court.

The leading port, taken by the Commons in transferring the Crown from the House of Stuart to that of Orange, was recognised by a statute, bestowing on the Speaker the style of "first Commoner of the realm." Of Sir John Trevor, who first enjoyed that distinction, something has been already said; he was equally ready to do the dirty work of the Sovereign, whose title was parliamentary, and one who reigned by Divine right. William III. protested his dislike for such expedience, but did not see his way to dispense with the agencies, which the age's corruption placed at his disposal. Speaker Trevor undertook to secure the Tory vote for a round sum. The combat was carried out to the monarch's satisfaction. But retribution overtook the first Commoner. In 1695, a committee of the House proved Trevor to have taken a bribe of £1,000 from the East India Company; he evaded, on a plea of illness, the crowning disgrace of putting a motion to expel himself; he simply stayed away. Wharton brought down a message from the King for the election of the new chairman. Two instances of friction between William III. and the House of Commons are to be mentioned. In November, 1693, a Bill, guaranteeing some liberties of the House, awaited the Royal consent. William refused. Pressed to reconsider the matter, he reiterated his disapproval. The House discussed but could not pass a motion condemning the King's conduct.

In the same way William would have better consulted his dignity by at first refusing, and afterwards accepting, the Triennial Act. But notwithstanding the establishment of its supremacy in the seventeenth century, the House of Commons still lacked the power directly to make its will felt on national policy. That inability must continue so long as the executive ministers were responsible not to itself but to the Crown. The time had come for the removal of the anomaly under which the House could impeach an offending

minister, could remove him, but could not certainly replace him by a successor after its own mind. This sense of its own impotence bred in the Commons an irritable vexation, that kept it in an ill-humour with itself, with the Sovereign, as well as lowered its efficiency as an instrument of popular rule. Robert, Earl of Sunderland, a clever and unscrupulous politician, who had for his own ends exchanged Romanism and James II. for Protestantism and William III. completed the political organization of the Lower House, when he advised William to abandon his purpose of dividing the Cabinet between Whigs and Tories, and exclusively to choose its members from the majority, for the time being, in the popular Chamber. Now first, the men forming the administration ceased to be independent atoms; they became a corporate whole. The minister, thus representing a majority at St. Stephen's, now naturally became the leader of the House. The Cabinet consisted nominally of the King's servants, but really of servants of the House. That House had traditionally been on friendly terms with the City of London. Under the leadership of Montague, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and of Wharton, who was at Westminster and in the constituencies the same marshalling power to the Whiggism of his day, that Pym had been in the Long Parliament, the House of Commons became a national Chamber of Commerce as well. The business capacity of Montague had created the Bank of England. The Tories, by their tax on that institution in the House, discredited themselves out of doors, as well as identified the Whig leaders and the entire Assembly with the commercial interest of the country. In 1697 the treaty of Ryswick gave the prestige of victory to the foreign war, which the House, by its votes, had carried on to fulfil its Protestant trust.

# CHAPTER VII.

## THE HOUSE IN THE AUGUSTAN AGE.

Anne's popularity with the nation decreases the power of Parliament—Her first Parliament—Large Tory majority—Robert Harley, Speaker—Biographical notice of Harley—Swift's opinion of Harley—His indecision and dilatoriness—The Kentish petition—Indignation of the Commons—The Treaty of Utrecht affirmed by the House—Rising importance of the Press—Harley's power—St. John's (Bolingbroke's) elocution—St. John Secretary-at-War in the Godolphin Government—Literary members of the House from Chaucer—The *Examiner* and the *Tatler*—Addison—His failure as an orator—His high official position—Richard Steele—Expelled from the House—Lack of respect for the House—Steele, however, a good speaker—Debate concerning the Union with Scotland—Union with Scotland—Last meeting of the Scottish Parliament—Jonathan Swift—His personal appearance—His friendship with Bolingbroke—Predominance of the Tories in the country.

THE Dutch origin of William III. and the foreign associations of the Stuarts had been favourable to the influence of the House of Commons. Jealousy of the foreigner had always been an English characteristic. The nation now saw in the men it returned to St. Stephen's an assembly more genuinely representative of itself, than was either the actual wearer of, or the claimant to, the Crown of the realm. Queen Anne, however, could justly boast of being entirely English. More of personal ambition, and of intellectual energy, might have prompted her to the indiscretion of reopening the Stuart rivalry with the Commons. Her acceptance of the political situation, as it had been left by William, deepened the national

affection, that her sex, her birth, the sorrows and vicissitudes of her life, had enlisted on her side. They did, however, more than this. By reviving the personal attachment of the country to the Crown, they strengthened the Sovereign against the Commons; they appreciably affected the temper and the policy of the popular Chamber. The great war, on whose battlefields Marlborough had won fame, was now as cordially accepted at St. Stephen's as it had before been disliked. In 1704 the effects of the battle of Blenheim were felt directly at St. Stephen's. The enthusiastic attachment to the Stuart Queen, which followed the liberation of England and Europe from the influences, summed up in the Court and policy of Louis XIV., encouraged the Tories in the popular Chamber to engage in an attempt for maintaining a permanent Tory majority.

The results of the first general election under Anne favoured the scheme. There was no need, as in the two preceding reigns, for the Court managers to manipulate the polling. Without any pressure the constituencies hastened to show their full participation in the Sovereign's political preferences. In the House that first met, October 20th, 1702, the Tories outnumbered their opponents by at least two to one. The nation had for some time been wearying of a costly and protracted war kept up to gratify the Whigs. Godolphin himself, as Lord Treasurer, now sat in the Peers. Three of his nearest relatives were returned for Cornish constituencies. The Opposition numbered the Hampdens and several other descendants of the Long Parliament worthies. For the first time, too, a Cornish borough sent to Westminster a representative of the Molesworth family. The figure most conspicuous and interesting in Anne's first House of Commons was the Speaker, the future minister and Earl of Oxford, now plain Robert Harley. His presence was dignified; a strikingly intellectual brow overhung a face whose features suggested vanity,

irresolution, and, perhaps, self-indulgence. Of this family of parliamentary repute in the sixteenth century something has been already said. Robert Harley's father, Sir Edward, of Brampton Bryan, in Hertfordshire, had been among the most active sympathisers with Nonconformity and Republicanism during the civil wars; together with Oliver Cromwell and Speaker Lenthall he had been among the first to sign the Solemn League and Covenant. He was next entrusted by the Long Parliament with the congenial duty of destroying all altars, crucifixes, and other such decorations in churches. Cromwell, however, had expelled him from the House of Commons; that won him the favour of Charles II., who, though Sir Edward had never left the Country Party, appointed him Governor of Dunkirk.

Sir Edward's eldest son, Robert Harley, unlike the most distinguished of those with whom, as friends or foes, he was afterwards to be associated, had not been at a public school; at Mr. Birch's private Presbyterian academy the future Lord Oxford had for class-mates a coming Lord Chancellor, Harcourt, another famous judge, as well as ten members, all distinguished, of the Lower House. Sir Edward Harley saw in the Universities Royalist and Tory hotbeds; he therefore sent his son direct from school to an inn of court. In 1688, the Worcestershire squires chose Robert Harley to present their services to the Prince of Orange; the electors of Truro first, and of Radnor afterwards, gave him a place in the Convention House. Here Harley from the first took up with great patience and skill, the part of the independent member, who always kept his vote a secret till the very moment of the division. William's earliest ministers seem to have neglected him. Robert Harley discovered conscientious and invincible objections to the Court's proposals, both as to the army and the Irish grants. The High Churchman applauded his courage and wisdom. The Low Churchman admired his

sense of duty, and noted him as a politician they must conciliate. He showed an early mastery of the forms, rules, and customs of St. Stephen's; he knew how, without apparent obtrusion, he could lengthen or shorten debates. So shrewd a judge as Jonathan Swift summed up Harley by saying that, though not eloquent, he knew how to prevail in the House with few words and strong reasons. Above all things, a man of business and standing high with the City, he proved himself, next to Montague, the first financier at St. Stephen's; unlike Montague, Harley never actually served as Chancellor of the Exchequer; he was the most popular and capable chairman ever known to the Committee of Ways and Means. He became William's selection for the Speakership; during his last year at the chair, he was Secretary of State and leader of the House as well. Whoever they might be, with whom from time to time he acted, Harley always inspired his colleagues with distrust. Recording a dinner with Secretary Harley, January, 1705, Swift mentions his having drunk two bottles of imperial Tokay, as well as several of white Lisbon. Apart from the influence of these potations, Harley struck Swift as never able to deal clearly and openly, but to love tricks, because of his own inborn trickiness. If any man was ever born to be a knave, it was Mr. Secretary. One Statute, passed by Anne's first House, Harley was responsible for; a French refugee, Giuscard, stabbed the minister with a penknife; the personal feeling for Harley excited by the attempt suggested the falsehood that the victim was also the inciter of the crime. The House at once voted that, in future, an outrage on a Privy Councillor would be punished as felony without benefit of clergy. Harley is one of those members of the House on whom rival critics have exhausted the antagonistic superlatives of the English language. Swift applied to him the poet's encomium, "by far the greatest minister I ever knew." An historian of our own time points to Harley as an

instance of the ease with which popularity and power may be obtained without the help of genius or virtue. Harley's habits won him both hostility and contempt. His indecision and dilatoriness made the transaction of any business with him disagreeable. The very Post Office complained that his unpunctuality with his dispatches often kept the place open an hour beyond closing time. "He, that knows not whither to go, is in no haste to move," was Dr. Johnson's pithy comment of this remarkable character.

Harley's first term of Speakership had been marked by an incident suggestive of the decadence in national opinion reached by the House. Some leading inhabitants of the county of Kent had discussed in disparaging terms amongst themselves the conduct of the popular Chamber in showing itself so quarrelsome with the Upper House and so distrustful of the King. The chairman of the Kentish magistrates, William Culpepper, and five others, carried up to St. Stephen's, in the shape of a petition, the declarations of the Maidstone Bench. While this deputation was waiting in the lobby, one of their members, named Meredith, rushed out with an account of the reception given to the document. The excitement, indeed, was without parallel, since the women of London had waited on John Pym with their grievances. The whole county was declared by the angry Chamber to be implicated in this outrage on its dignity. Sir Edward Seymour was for doubly taxing the whole shire and confiscating the property of all who had signed the paper. Howe, a violent Tory from Gloucestershire, was for cutting off all the hands, were they one hundred thousand, of the signatories. It was, of course, expected that the leader of the movement, Culpepper, would pray that the earth might swallow him up or retreat in terror. On the contrary, the unabashed justice of the peace adapted the reply of Luther to those who would have urged him not to enter Worms, saying that, if every tile

on the roof of St. Stephen's Chapel were a devil, he would go on with the petition if he had to present it himself, and that he would continue knocking at the door till it was opened. It was vain for Speaker Harley first to summon some petitioners to the Bar; then, when he had pointed out to them the awful nature of their crime, and dismissed them to the lobby, to tell them, through Seymour, that Mr. Howe was denouncing them at great length, but that there was yet time, when Howe's speech was over, to save themselves from ruin by penitence. Eventually the House, by Harley, stigmatised the petition as insolent, seditious, tending to destroy Parliament and the Constitution itself. The petitioners were then committed in a body to Newgate, where they were kept till the prorogation, two months later.

Harley's fall proved as sudden and decisive as his rise had been dazzling. Of the Utrecht treaty, that served as the occasion of this overthrow, the terms of the peace to end the Whig war notoriously were settled, not by the congress that met at Utrecht, but between Harley, Bolingbroke (now St. John), and the Marquis de Torcui, through the intermediation of a French priest, living in London, the Abbé Gaultier. Bolingbroke himself, with Prior as secretary or *adlatus*, went to Versailles finally to settle the business. That treaty was to prove fatal to its chief author, as well as highly mischievous to his principal colleagues. After a debate, whose feature was the first appearance of a future Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. John Smith, a fervid attack on the Whigs by the Jacobite, Sir William Wyndham, and a protest by General Stanhope against degrading great issues into party squabbles, the Commons affirmed the leading clauses of the Utrecht arrangement by two hundred and fifty-two to one hundred and thirty. But the Press was now becoming a serious rival to St. Stephen's. Daniel Defoe's pen had, indeed, at this time been secured by the Tory managers; for

a long time previously he had written against them, and, in language more intelligible and convincing than that used by Tory publicists, had brought home to the English masses the loss inflicted on them by the commercial policy of the Tories. The work of leading articles in the penny Press was anticipated in the eighteenth century by the street ballads; these satirised in malignant doggerel "Honest Robin" (Harley himself, now called Bob), "Harry" (Bolingbroke), "Mat" (Prior), and "Arthur"; this last was Arthur Moore, now a Treasury official, who had begun life as a footman. Harley had been absolute master of the House of Commons; he had even dictated to the Lords, where he, on one day, created twelve Peers as a token of his supremacy. In the City of London his voice had always been that of an oracle. Now came the reverse. From Clarendon to North, from North to Canning, from Peel to Northcote, the Tory leaders have had reason to complain of their treatment by their followers at St. Stephen's. The extreme Tory right, speaking with the voice of the October Club, joined in the chorus of the ballad-singers, that Harley was an impostor. The Queen had complained of his coming half-tipsy into her presence; she now threw him over. The rank and file of the High Church Tories bowed before the rising son of Bolingbroke and Ormond.

The extraordinary charm and power of the speeches delivered by St. John, as Tory member for Wootton Basset, in a spell-bound House, were the admiration of his contemporaries. They have been the tradition of political posterity. Burnet, who disliked Bolingbroke, both as man and as politician, admitted his eloquence to be almost superhuman. The greatest orator of a rather later generation, Lord Chatham, declared that, of all the lost treasures, literary or artistic—the decades of Livy, the comedies of the ancient stage—he should, upon the whole, prefer to see a speech of Bolingbroke.

The same patrician hautiness that in Wentworth, Lord Strafford, had fascinated Parliament—the same air and associations of high-bred libertinism, may in Henry St. John have scandalised the House, but also made him its idol. The finely-cut features of a face, whose expression was generally one of intellectual energy, blended with contempt, was accompanied by a clear and carefully disciplined voice; in stature, St. John was about the same as Harley; during his speeches his dimensions seemed to expand with his spirit; his oratorical effects were heightened by the habit of occasionally pausing for reflection, and then resuming with fresh power and with some unexpected illustration. His comparison of the popular Chamber to a pack of hounds that likes the man who shows them sport, contains the secret of his own command of the Assembly; he understood all its humours; he could play at will on its fortes and foibles by varying the tone of his argument, and changing the colour of his fancy he could place those about him in any temper which he thought useful for his end. The greatest coxcomb of the day; the finest gentleman; the first man in the country; the most unprincipled scoundrel in the world—such were the different aspects of this single character. Always an actor, Bolingbroke was never satisfied without setting off his genius by playing two parts at once. Of a family, originally Whig, St. John attached himself to Harley, as the chief of the moderate Tories, and desiring to form a national party out of reasonable men on both sides. St. John foresaw this attempt must end in confusion, believed that he could ride the whirlwind and direct the storm; in 1704 Nottingham's resignation moderated the Toryism of the Godolphin government; it was now joined by Harley, as Secretary of State, and by St. John, as Secretary at War. It was less his part in the Utrecht treaty than his connection with the Stuart pretender that caused Bolingbroke to share in Harley's ruin; his flight to France is sufficiently

justified by the certainty that he could only have remained in England with the loss of his life.

The list of literary members of the House opens with Geoffrey Chaucer, knight of the shire for Kent; it includes, among famous Elizabethans, Sir Walter Raleigh; at the period now reached in these pages it introduces us to Matthew Prior; for the present it ends with Joseph Addison and his literary colleague, Richard Steele. During the seventeenth century the rivalry between the House and the Press was keen. It was the pamphlets and periodicals, which formed the first beginnings of English journalism, that acquainted the great body of the public with the opinions, if not the words, at St. Stephen's, of the most famous men on both sides. The *Examiner*, inspired by Bolingbroke, largely written by Swift, put the Tory case before the constituencies. In the same way the Whigs found their interpreters and advocates in the *Tatlers* and other sheets, written or designed by Addison or Steele. Born in 1672 of a traditionally clerical family, by the clerical associations and academic gravity which he brought from the Wiltshire vicarage, from the Charterhouse, from Queen's College, Oxford, and which he never lost, Addison, on entering the House as member for Malmsbury in 1708, was greeted as a parson in a tie-wig (that head-dress being then distinctive of the laity, as the bob-wig was of the clergy). His fame as a publicist had long preceded him at St. Stephen's; he had also, on the staff of the Lord-Lieutenant, Wharton, acquired official and even parliamentary experience in Ireland; here he had sat for Cavan; once only he had addressed the Irish House of Commons. The story is universally familiar; it has been sometimes misapplied to his experience in the English, and not the Irish, Chamber. But it was in the Dublin House that Addison thrice reiterated his opening words—"I conceive, Mr. Speaker"; on this a Dublin wit drew the chairman's notice to the fact that "the

honourable gentleman conceived three times, and brought forth nothing."

The official and parliamentary rank attained by Addison is incomparably the highest which literary ability alone ever won at St. Stephen's; he became successively Under Secretary of State, Chief Secretary for Ireland, finally Secretary of State before he had been nine years in the House; during this period he did, indeed, once rise to address it; he immediately lost his nerve; he could command neither language nor thought; he sat down immediately; he never again attempted to open his mouth. Richard Steele, rather more than ten years after Addison, only, under Anne, entered the Chamber to be expelled from it. His Whig articles in the *Guardian* had secured Steele's election for Stockbridge. In his *Crisis* he was thought to have insulted the House; whenever after this he rose he was shouted down. Almost shedding tears of mortification as he left the precinct, Steele heard the farewell shouted at him—"Tatler, tatler; the fellow may be able to scribble, but he can't speak." Steele, indeed, not more in his letters than in his talk and deportment at St. Stephen's, lacked the self-respect which the House expected in its members; he had been made theatrical censor; some remarks in the House about the South Sea directors gave offence to the Court; Steele lost his censorship. To recover it, he tried to undo the effect of his earlier words by a panegyric on those whom he had before denounced. At Button's coffee-house he was taunted with the inconsistency. *Cogit amor nummi* was the only retort he gave. The coffee-house listeners took it for a stroke of wit. The M.P. critics to whom it was repeated shrugged their shoulders with, "Hath poor Dick lost all shame." Steele, however, both in St. Stephen's and out of it, could, and did say very neat things, as, for instance, that the House consisted partly of silent people, oppressed by the choice of a great deal to say,

and of eloquent people, ignorant that what they did say was nothing to the purpose. In the debate on the Repeal of the Triennial Act Steele took a serious part—supporting the motion, that since the Statute was brought in the nation has always been in contentions; the first year has been spent in vindictive decisions about the late elections; in the second, business had only been transacted with the spirit of contradiction against what the men, prevailing in former Parliaments, had brought to pass, than of disinterested zeal for the public good; the third session has languished in pursuit of what was intended to be done in the second. Thus the country has ever been like a vessel in distress at sea; the mariners have only tried to keep the ship from sinking, and have never used the art of navigation to make sail.

The political and parliamentary union of Scotland and England had been the wish of James II.; it was the policy of William III., who, in his last year, appointed commissioners for the purpose. It became the achievement of the Houses, which met under Anne in 1707. Sir John Pakington, whose namesake and descendant is still remembered as a Tory member of Victorian Administrations, followed a popular private member, Charles Cæsar, in opening the debate with some objections to the proposal. Cæsar had been content mildly to hint dislike of the proposal. Pakington roundly denounced the pressure placed by the Cabinet or the Privy Council upon the House to accept it; out of doors and at St. Stephen's people for a long time had been tongue-tied; he, at least, would speak freely. Scotland, he maintained, had been prevailed on by bribery and force; it was like marrying a woman against her consent. Pakington's practical objections, in detail, were drawn from the vows with respect to the Scotch and English Churches, made by the Sovereign in the Coronation Oath. These arguments were disposed of by another Midland member, also a stout three-bottle Tory,

General Mordaunt. He, with a face deepened by wrath and wine into a ruby hue, at once rose to call Almighty God to witness that, as for Pakington's *jure divino* and *jure humano*, the English Crown was equally supreme over the Anglican Church and Scotch Kirk. Ministers were for quickening the pace of the debate; the Whips were overheard crying out "post-haste." Sir Thomas Littleton, just disturbed from a dose over his tankard at a neighbouring tavern, deprecatorily and rather drowsily observed, "They did not ride post-haste, but at an easy trot, and, for his part, so long as the weather was fair, the roads good, and their horses in heart, he thought they ought to jog on till night."

Fumings and splutterings of discontent like these there were, but no real opposition; the Commons did not even divide on the main question. The Scottish Parliament registered the Union Treaty, March 25th, 1707. A month later, the gossips in the Westminster lobbies were laughing over the levity with which the Scotch Chancellor, Seafield, having taken his morning dram before entering the Assembly for the last time, half sung, half said, "There is an end of an auld sang." Another Scotch lawyer uttered his adieu in a more exalted tone—"I think I see our ancient mother, Caledonia, like Cæsar, sitting in the midst of our Senate, ruefully looking round about her, covering herself with her Royal garment, attending the fatal blow, and breathing out her last with an *et tu quoque mi fili!*"

During this whole period the Westminster lobbies were often visited by a stranger, who was a greater power in both Houses than most of the members themselves. This was a gentleman whose cassock and bob-wig were the only signs of his clerical calling. In person, Dr. Jonathan Swift rose considerably above the middle height; his build was strong, and showed a noticeably fine outline of throat and chest; the front face was unpleasant rather than uncomely; the

clear chisling of the nose; the curved upper lip; the full, strong chin; the resoluteness stamped upon the large forehead; the clear blue eye, fixed all eyes upon a comely and noble profile. Often this haunter of the parliamentary precincts appeared in the lobby of St. Stephen's, when he was, together with Matt Prior, "to starve on three courses at the Duke of Ormond's"; the poet had to borrow a shilling from the doctor to pay for his chair; he would repay it, when rest from his diplomatic appointments inspired him with more and better rhymes than "docket and cocket." The doctor would wind up the evening with broiled oysters and champagne at St. John's, Lord Bolingbroke, his admiration for whose genius did not prevent Swift penetrating his affectations and follies; "if," said the dean, "he thought himself less like Alcibiades, talked less about operas and singers, if he never spoke of his unfitness for business, when he had been working like gumdragon to get the load upon his shoulders, and, if he could be sincere, would be adorned with the choicest gifts ever bestowed by Heaven on the children of man." While the Lower House was ejecting Sir Richard Steele, the Upper had taken high offence with Dean Swift. It discovered in the *Tale of a Tub* a passage insulting to the Crown, to the Whig Lords who advocated the Union, and remarks injurious to the Union itself.

Apart from the personal incidents, the most important of which have already been sketched, the interest, possessed by the House of Commons during what is called the Augustan period of English letters, comes rather from the development of the party system, witnessed at St. Stephen's, than from notable debates that took place within its walls. The softening down of the old into the moderate Toryism; the replacement of Rochester and his high colleagues by Harley and Bolingbroke—these may be summed up as the chief movements of the House of Commons between the accession

of Anne and the peace of Utrecht. The humour of the country was decidedly Tory; the nation had wearied of Marlborough's wars, with which it associated the Whigs; it wanted peace; it did not trouble itself to master the Whig objections to the arrangements of Utrecht. As Swift saw, and as he repeatedly said, the party system had for the moment become obsolete. In the constant quarrels between the two Chambers the country was with the Commons, because the Tory majority was there, pitted against the permanent Whig majority in the Lords. The spirit showed in both Chambers during the discussions on the perpetually re-introduced Occasional Conformity Bill emphasized this sentiment. The quarrel between the elective and hereditary House had come to a head in the Aylesbury election; this involved the decision of the Lords, prompting the Aylesbury electors to sue the returning officers, and the subsequent committal to Newgate of the electors themselves. The incident generated so much heat that it could be closed only by the prorogation of March 14th, 1705.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## THE HOUSE IN HANOVERIAN TIMES.

The Aylesbury Election Petition—Speech by Sir R. Walpole concerning the petition—St. John's views on it—The family of Walpole—Norfolk education—Walpole's marriage—Contrast between Walpole and Bolingbroke—Walpole's first appointment—Great power of Marlborough and Godolphin—Bolingbroke in power—The Sacheverel prosecution—Walpole Secretary-at-War under Godolphin—Walpole's writings—Violent turnovers of majorities—The Tory Ministry of 1710—Impeachment of Walpole—Expelled from the House—Walpole as a social entertainer—The Treaty of Utrecht—The Tory policy—The Schism Act—Threatened Tory absolutism—Death of Queen Anne—Fall of Tories—Walpole's rise to power—Viscount Townshend and General Stanhope—William Pulteney—His knowledge of the House—His speaking—His indiscretions—Notable members opposed to Walpole—Lawyers in the House—Sir Peter King—Returned for Beeralston—Locke's advice to King—Sir Joseph Jekyll—An advocate of social reform—John Holt—His conduct in the Aylesbury case—Henry Pollexfen—Sir Robert Raymond—Heneage Finch—Sir Dudley North—Roger North.

ONE of Anne's earliest Parliaments would have been memorable, if for nothing else, than the first appearance of two famous members of the House of Commons. Both had been Eton boys together. Both, though now on different sides, had at one time held upon some subjects the same opinions. The question before the House is known indifferently as the case of the Aylesbury election, or of Ashby and White. It has already been just mentioned; its leading incidents may be briefly summarised. The returning officers for the Buckinghamshire borough had been notoriously under the imputation of tampering with the returns, in favour of

their personal or political friends. At the election of 1703, one of the Aylesbury burgesses, a brewer, named Matthew Ashby, had been prevented by the local officials from voting; Ashby brought an action against the returning officer, White, and obtained a verdict. The case now went to a higher court; three of the four judges of the Queen's Bench pronounced that all matters connected with the votes and voters, were exclusively in the jurisdiction of the House of Commons. Upon this the case went, by a writ of error, before the House of Lords; the Queen's Bench decision was now set aside, and the case finally decided in favour of Ashby. The Commons now entered into the dispute, declared that Ashby, by appealing to law, had committed a breach of privilege. The Lords now resolved that the right of voting, like any other right, might be maintained by an action at common law. The House of Commons, flushed by its recent victories, was in no humour to be dictated to upon a subject directly touching its own prerogatives. Within the last few sessions, it had compelled William III. to withdraw his refusal of its Triennial Act. It had wrested from the Crown its traditional prerogative as to the national commerce, by asserting its right to nominate the council of trade; it had prescribed every detail of the measures which signalised William's reign, for securing liberty of the press and of religion. Since the Crown had accepted Sunderland's suggestion for forming a ministry only from a majority in the popular Chamber, the King's servants in the Cabinet had become, in effect, responsible, not to the Crown, but to itself. The Commons, therefore, were in no humour to tolerate, not an affront (of that there could be no suspicion, for their protégé, the Aylesbury voter Ashby, had won along the whole line), they resented the ordinary procedure, which could convey even the suspicion of a slight upon their omnipotence. Their own devotion to the Church of England reflected the affection for it of the Queen, who

had just surrendered the Royal claim to the first fruits of ecclesiastical benefices, that there might be created the fund, known as Queen Anne's Bounty, for the help of poor clergy. It was enough, therefore, to enrage the Commons, that, in enforcing his rights as an elector, Ashby had not begun his proceedings with the assumption of their own infallibility. The Aylesbury burgess was not indeed committed to Newgate, as several of his partizans afterwards were; he was charged with a grievous breach of privilege in having dared to think the House amenable to the common law of the land. After a long series of debates, the House resolved that all matters appertaining to votes and voters at elections, came within its own exclusive jurisdiction, that the House and the House alone could interpose in an electoral return.

These were the discussions which brought forward for the first time the future Sir Robert Walpole, and the future Viscount Bolingbroke. A county member, Sir William Strickland, by some common-sense remarks on the lay aspects of the case, had tried to disentangle the question of writ of error, *scire facias*, and the other legal technicalities and phrases, which had made it thus far a mere lawyers' quarrel. On the eve of the division being taken, a burly country gentleman from Norfolk, wearing hunting-boots and knee-breeches, rose to express his opinion that the matter before the House comes to this single question, whether you will encourage and give a power to an officer, be he whom he will, to act arbitrarily, or rather choose in such a case to do something in favour of the electors. "If," was the central point of Walpole's argument, "a mayor or constable may deny a man his vote, you will have officials manipulating the constituency at will, and returning not whom the electors choose, but whom the men in authority desire." After Walpole, the chief figures in the debate were the Marquis of Hartington or

that day, then heard for the first time, and, as already mentioned, St. John; the space in the Commons' Journals given to that latter speech is only a few lines, consisting of the simplest statement that the Crown might be trusted not to abuse the opportunity of influencing votes. "St. John" was, he said, as good a friend of popular liberty as Lord Hartington or any other gentleman "over the way"; for that reason he thought the House should be very careful how it curtailed the power of returning officers; as for the alleged influence of the Crown, he did not think that the liberties of the people would be safe in any lower hands, or that the influence of the Crown would be stronger in the Court of Parliament than in other Courts.

St. John has already been sketched in these pages. His opponent, since their Eton days together, Walpole, was the fifth of a family of nineteen, born to Mr. Robert Walpole, a Norfolk squire of large property and old descent. The founder of the House had come over with William the Conqueror; members of it had sat in the House of Commons continuously since Edward II.; the future minister's grandfather Edward Walpole, returned to the Convention Parliament of 1660, an eloquent and weighty speaker, voted for the Restoration of Charles II., was knighted with the Order of the Bath; his son, Robert, the first actively Whig Walpole, sat at St. Stephen's from 1688 to 1700. A good farmer, a convivial companion, a first-rate man of business, a keen sportsman, a thrifty manager, he transmitted most of these qualities to the statesman, his third son, who, with a view to taking orders, had been sent to Eton and to King's, Cambridge. In 1698, both his brothers were dead; Robert Walpole now found himself heir to the family estates; he took his name off the college books, settled down in his Norfolk home to mingle in the paternal pleasures, and to learn estate management from his father; that worthy, a seasoned toper,

took good care that his son did not shirk his liquor, because no child should ever be sober enough to know that his parent was tipsy; amid these surroundings, Robert Walpole grew up to twenty-four, with no other thought of becoming anything higher than a first-rate grazier; that, to judge from his exterior and manners, was exactly what nature had intended him to be; among his neighbours in the country were some who had observed the vigorous mind, the quick eye for character, and a union of shrewdness with ambition, which were to make him a great man; in 1700, Robert Walpole married an heiress and a beauty, the daughter of the Lord Mayor of London, Sir John Shorter; before the year was out, his father died and he came into his estate, bringing in a clear rental of more than £2,000 a year, and carrying with it two pocket boroughs, Castle Rising and Lynn; Walpole himself was elected, as his father had been before him, for the first of these places; he sat for it throughout the reign of William III. In 1702 he took his seat for his other borough of Lynn; he held it till his fall from power nearly half a century later. If this continuity of relation between a member and his constituency be rarer in a democratic House than was formerly the case, it is still very far from being unknown to-day.

At the time of Walpole's entrance upon public life to those, who look back upon it now, the work of the revolution may seem to have passed the danger of being undone; the majority of the English people had indeed irreversibly decided for a Protestant and limited monarchy, independent of France. So, in 1873, as Mr. John Morley reminds us, had France resolved for a republic; yet but for the invincible devotion of the Count of Chambord to the white flag of the Bourbons, France would certainly have witnessed a legitimist Restoration; in much the same way, three years later, in 1876, neither France nor Germany nationally desired a renewal of war; but had not the English and Russian Courts successfully used their

influence at Berlin on the side of peace, Prince Bismarck would certainly have prevailed upon the old Emperor William to sound the attack upon the vanquished foe of 1870-1. Among the statesmen of his day, Walpole was the first to recognise that no set of political questions can be regarded as finally closed so long as there exists a powerful and unscrupulous minority, interested in keeping such questions open. Walpole had supported the Whig chiefs in the Act of Settlement; there is no record of his having spoken on it, or indeed upon any subject before the House, till the Aylesbury election case —the occasion, as has been seen, when, as St. John, Bolingbroke also took part in the debate.

Walpole's embarrassment of manner and hesitation of voice were contrasted by spectators with Bolingbroke's fluent brilliancy and consummate elocution. "You may say what you like," observed an old parliamentary critic of the period, "but the fine gentleman who mimics Alcibiades will never get much farther; the young squire from the eastern county will become a good speaker, and the first man in the House and in the country." During the whole of that period, the chief maker and unmaker of all administrations was a member of the Upper House, John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough—now, for the support of his military projects, importing a Tory element into a Whig administration, now, for the same reason, tempering Toryism with a Whig leaven. That manipulation of the party system in his own interest seems almost to presage the political tactics of the great duke's nineteenth century descendant. The one thing which gave consistency to Lord Randolph Churchill's career in the House of Commons, was his ceaseless attempt to employ as his instruments the political divisions at St. Stephen's; in that endeavour he did more than any other individual ever accomplished to throw the whole party system itself into the crucible. To Marlborough, Walpole owed his first piece of

official promotion—that to a minor place on the council of Queen Anne's husband, Prince George of Denmark. Godolphin, a man of extraordinary aptitude for great or small affairs, was struck by the care, by the financial capacity, as well as charmed by the easy manners of his young subordinate. In Queen Anne's first and overwhelming Tory House of Commons, Walpole, as a Whig, could have no chance; during eight years, until 1710, Marlborough and Godolphin acted as Anne's viceroys; in 1702 Godolphin and Marlborough received as allies the high-flying Tories under Lord Nottingham. Two years later, these fell away; the Queen's two grand viziers brought into their administration the moderate Tories, Harley and St. John, with the idea of balancing the Whig element, represented by Cooper and Sunderland. So little, even as late as this, was understood or practised the theory of an homogeneous administration, to which Sunderland had won over William III. After this, Godolphin and Marlborough displeased the Queen and alienated their colleagues by taking, in 1706, Sunderland into their administration. Then came a period during which Government by party was suspended, and Government by groups took its place.

> "What voice now swells from Anne's Augustan days?
> What form of beauty glows upon the gaze?
> Bright as the Greek to whom all toil was ease,
> Flash'd forth the English Alcibiades.
> He for whom Swift had not one cynic sneer,
> Whom hardiest Walpole honour'd with his fear,
> Whose lost harangues a Pitt could more deplore
> Than all the gaps in Greek and Roman lore,
> Appalling, charming, St. John shone,
> And stirred that age as Byron thrill'd our own." *

Now, for a short time, the stormy star of Bolingbroke was to be in the ascendant. By a snatched vote in a thin House,

*Bulwer Lytton's *St. Stephen's.*

the Whigs secured the condemnation of Dr. Sacheverel for his sermons; they committed the absurdity of advertising the preacher and their own weakness by his prosecution. In those days the pulpit was a recognised agency for "demonstrating"; a sermon at St. Paul's might, in the eighteenth century, be what a Hyde Park meeting was to the nineteenth. To proceed against a Divine for anything he said on such an occasion, was much the same thing as if a Government of Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Disraeli had formally indicted an hostile stump orator at the "Reformer's Tree." The Tory reaction which followed, rose to its full height at the general election of 1710-11; the Harley-St. John Government followed; it remained without any change until Harley's promotion to the earldom of Oxford removed him from the Lower House. But the era of Marlborough administrations was about to close; early in 1708, Godolphin, alternately a Whig and Tory, now formed an administration exclusively Whig; Walpole became Secretary at War in the room of St. John. Walpole's chief contribution to the discussions of this agitated season was not in the House of Commons, but in the press; in a pamphlet, parts of which are as clearly and as vigorously written as anything that came from the polished pen of Bolingbroke, Walpole argued that the men who instigated Sacheverel were those pledged to support the Pretender. What could mean the condemnation of the policy which dethroned the father, if not the restoration of the son?

The history of the House of Commons during Anne's last four years is specially interesting and instructively relevant to a later and more democratic age, because it shows the violent turnover majorities between 1860 and 1900, not, as is sometimes said, to be the result of our existing and all but universal suffrage. No revulsion of electoral feeling was ever more rapid and decisive than that which substituted the Tory majority in 1710 for the Whig majority in 1708.

Under Anne began in fact the series of Tory efforts for the Crown's independence of the popular party, which ended in the triumph of the younger Pitt over Fox in 1784. On the Whig defeat and dismissal of 1710, the clean sweep, which has since become the essence of party Government, was so little understood, that Harley would have conciliated the Whigs by keeping on Walpole; as a fact, Walpole, while refusing these overtures, for some little time after the Whig collapsed, retained the Treasurership of the Navy, which he had held, together with the Secretaryship at War.

Now Walpole found his first opportunity of asserting himself as the greatest financial statesman of his time. The Tory majority charged Godolphin with malversation of the national funds, to the extent of thirty-five millions unaccounted for. Walpole's written refutation of the charge was so successful as to unite his adversaries in the attempt to get him out of the House; a charge was now brought against him of having received five hundred guineas in cash, and having taken a note for five hundred pounds more on account for two contracts for forage of the troops in North Britain, during his Secretaryship at War. It was, therefore, proposed that Robert Walpole should be declared guilty of "high breach of trust and notorious corruption," that he should be committed to the Tower, detained there at the House's pleasure, and formally expelled. The division on the main question showed a majority of fifty-seven against Walpole (two hundred and five to one hundred and forty-eight); other divisions were scarcely more favourable, though the motion for committal to the Tower was carried only by twenty-two.

The attacks on Godolphin and Walpole were made under cover of the motion appointing a committee for examining the national accounts. St. John chiefly instigated these tactics. Walpole replied with great spirit in defence of Godolphin, but said little about himself, or about certain

" hyprocritical asseverations " of St. John in regard to religion (just referred to by him, and not mentioned in any entry concerning Bolingbroke's speech). During his imprisonment, Walpole prepared, immediately on his release at the end of the session, he published, a piece of his own, " The Debts of the Nation Stated and Considered "—described to the public as written by " the best master of his figures of any man of his time."* The House, while expelling Walpole, had declared him disqualified for re-election during that Parliament; his constituents at Lynn at once sent him back; a second sentence of expulsion was, therefore, passed upon him at St. Stephen's. The incident thus furnishes the first precedent for the case of Wilkes and the Middlesex electors sixty years later. During the long vacation which followed, Walpole performed the social as well as the political functions of the leader of the party; he filled his house at Houghton with a succession of guests; there were partridge-shooting parties in September; next month the pheasant preserves yielded splendid sport; there were lawn meets of the East Anglian foxhounds in November; as Walpole and his friends appeared in their pinks at the covert side, the expelled minister received a ringing welcome; a dinner followed in the old Houghton hall; the day closed with a county ball and a supper, at which the ladies could scarcely hold their skirts above the wine floods.

The debates on the Treaty of Utrecht, in addition to the criticisms of the party leaders, produced several speeches, full of exceedingly intelligent and well-informed comment upon the English trade prospect from private members like a future Speaker, Sir Thomas Hanmer, Sir William Wyndham, the West of Englanl Jacobite leader, Sir Joseph Jekyll, a former Governor of the Bank of England, Nathaniel Gould, Sir Peter King, and the future husband of a famous lady,

* *Parliamentary History*, Vol. VI., pp. 1067-1070.

Mr. Wortley Montague, members on the Tory as well as on the Whig side were equally free in their remarks on the treaty. The highest literary ability of the day was at first divided, but afterwards unanimous, in maintaining the treaty; Daniel Defoe had originally denounced the foreign trade of England; he now joined with Swift in praising the treaty for extending that trade. The best commercial results indeed followed from the Peace of Utrecht; credit for them in the House of Commons and elsewhere was, of course, claimed on behalf of Bolingbroke and the other treaty makers; the praise of course really belonged to the country's determination in persevering with the war, which won these solid successes, but which was opposed by the Tories in both Houses. It was the tranquillity, following the Utrecht settlement, which gave Walpole afterwards the opportunity of pursuing his particular abilities to great advantage to the country.

Meanwhile the Tories, under Bolingbroke and Harley, triumphantly floated on the flood tide. In 1711 Harley had become Earl of Oxford and Lord Treasurer. St. John thus led the House of Commons. The life, soul, and essence of Toryism now was, and continued to be, Jacobite. The succession of the Pretender to Anne, together with the crushing of the dissenters and the sovereignty on the landed interest, constituted the Tory policy through the successive sessions at St. Stephen's, which passed before the first George was proclaimed King. Marlborough's overthrow had removed the one check on the fulfilment of the reactionary programme. The House now pleased the Tory territorialists by enacting that every county member must have £600 a year from land, and every borough member £300; at last, too, an intrigue between the Whigs and the Tory malcontents secured the repeal of the Bill, allowing dissenters to qualify for public offices by periodic acts of conformity to the Church of England. St. John, in religion at the utmost a deist, in alliance

with the High Church prelate Atterbury, vindicated his Anglican orthodoxy by the Schism Act, by which dissenters were prevented from keeping schools of any kind, or even from educating their own children; the edifice of exclusive intolerance was to have been crowned by depriving dissenters of the parliamentary vote, and closing against them the doors of St. Stephen's; the landed interest and the Crown would thus have monopolised all authority; the Tories would have enjoyed eternity of tenure; party government would have come to an end, and the House of Commons, as a popularly representative Assembly, would have been no more. Then, suddenly, came the bedchamber revolution; the new episode in the Masham intrigue, the quarrel between Bolingbroke and Oxford in the presence of Anne; the disgrace and dismissal of the latter; the shock to the system of the agitated Sovereign that ended in her death by apoplexy, August 1st, 1714. As Bolingbroke with a friend for the last time passed out of the parliamentary purlieu, he said, in a voice trembling with emotion, "The grief of my soul is this: I see plainly that the Tory party is no more." To Swift Bolingbroke wrote: "The Earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday; the Queen died on Sunday. What a world is this, and how does fortune banter us." "It is true, my lord," replied Swift, "the events of five days last week might furnish morals for another volume of Seneca."

With the destruction of the Jacobite hopes, the unopposed and peaceful transfer of the Stuart Crown to the dynasty, which the 1688 revolution had brought in, the Tory party, as Bolingbroke said, in its earliest and most impracticable form, had indeed ceased to exist. Now begins the more powerful and responsible portion of Walpole's course. The Whigs were in an undoubted majority; the new King entrusted his affairs entirely to Whig ministers; he abolished the office of Lord Treasurer; its style is never used again. Charles, Viscount

Townshend, a brother-in-law of Walpole, was thus far chiefly known for having introduced the turnip from Germany to Norfolk, and for having improved the rotation of crops; his father was one of the Presbyterians who had helped forward the Restoration of Charles II.; he had received his title of baron in 1661, of viscount in 1682; his son and successor had begun life as a Tory; he soon fell under the influence of Somers, and worked with the Whigs; after some years, passed in diplomacy at home and abroad, he lost his appointments in 1711 on the formation of the Harley-Bolingbroke administration. That made his rupture with the Tories final; he at once joined the supporters of the new dynasty, entered into relations with the future George I., then elector of Hanover; he was rewarded on the opening of the new reign by being sworn in Secretary of State; he chose as his colleague Stanhope; Townshend's new associate had first made his mark in public life as member for Newport in William's last Parliament; he had then spoken on military rather than on political subjects. To the discussion of all professional matters he had brought great practical knowledge, based upon a foundation of wider culture than was usually possessed by the soldiers of that day; after some years of real study at Oxford, he travelled in Italy and Spain; he first took up arms in the service of the Duke of Saxony; he then became a soldier of fortune, of a type common at that period, and familiar to later times from Scott's sketch of Dugald Dalgetty. In 1694 he repaired to King William's headquarters in Flanders; he was at once admitted into the Royal Foot Guards with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. Returning home, covered with wounds and fame, he was asked to let himself be nominated for the constituency just named; his military career was, however, far from being at an end; he fought under the Duke of Ormond at Cadiz, under Charles III. of Spain in Portugal, gathered fresh laurels at the siege of Barcelona; in 1704 he

had been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general in the British service; he became successively major-general in 1707, and, in 1708, commander-in-chief of the British troops in Spain; before that, he had gathered civil experience by a mission to Charles III. Yet all this time he ranked among the most influential members of the Lower House, so important as to be one of the twenty managers of the Sacheverel impeachment. But for General Stanhope's connection with Townshend and Walpole, he might not have attained his present office; he would still have been a political force of his period. General Stanhope's colleague at St. Stephen's, in ability far his own superior, was the descendant of a parliamentary family, often mentioned in these pages; Pulteneys had been found in its ranks ever since the Whig party came into being. William Pulteney, the son of a city knight, sprang from the same class that afterwards was to furnish the House of Commons with Peel and Gladstone. His grandfather, as member for Westminster, had been known as a busy politician and a first-rate debater; to those qualities, scholarship and general culture were added by the man now spoken of. At Oxford, Pulteney had been chosen by Dean Aldrich to present the address to Queen Anne when she visited Christ Church; after some years' fashionable touring in European capitals, Pulteney's guardian, a former Secretary to the Treasury, Henry Guy, secured the return of his ward for the Yorkshire borough of Heydon. Pulteney resembled a parliamentary predecessor of very different temper than his own, John Eliot, of the seventeenth century, in the closeness with which he studied the House in all its moods and humours, as a living organism, and the industry he spent in mastering its practice and rules. Excellence as a speaker was with him the work of time; he seldom missed a chance of addressing the House; only after he had been in it nearly ten years, towards the close of Anne's reign, had he

a front place among speakers and debaters; in both these capacities he was now pronounced by the critical Chesterfield to be the completest man in the place; in addition to copiousness, flexibility of voice, and grace in delivery, he generally had at his command more wit, argument, and, if wanted, pathos, than were possessed by any one of his contemporaries. Of his convivial indiscretions there can be no doubt; his reputation for the opposite fault of avarice seems undeserved; the one trait of meanness established against him was his habit of paying small tradesmen in foreign coin, which he brought home from his travels, whose value in English money he computed to his own advantage. Walpole did not rise to absolute pre-eminence till seven or eight years after the accession of the first Hanoverian Sovereign. In the earliest days of George I. Pulteney ranked as the first of the Whig managers.

Before tracing Walpole's later development, something should be said about the chiefs of the recently deposed Tories, now sitting on the Speaker's left hand. Exactly opposite the strong square figure with the coarse, jolly face of the new Secretary at War, often sat a gentleman of singularly graceful carriage, strikingly handsome features, light hair, clear blue eyes, and a pink and white complexion, which might have been envied by a girl in her teens. This was Sir William Wyndham, the friend and disciple of Bolingbroke, the natural chief of Jacobite Toryism; to please his master he affected the profligacy, which was the fashion; at heart, no one was less of a man of pleasure, or more exemplary in all the domestic relationships of life. The only other notable members of the Tory or Jacobite party in the first House of Commons of George I., were William Bromley, who sat for Oxford University, and Sir Thomas Hanmer, who had once been Speaker under Anne.

Among the active members of the early Georgian House

who stood a little outside the conventional party lines, was a group of lawyers. During more than a generation following the Long Parliament, the scriptural and legal qualities, which it then took on, continued to colour the oratory at St. Stephen's. These characteristics had disappeared when the Hanoverian dynasty was established. The lawyers themselves, proscribed though they had been in the House so far back as Edward III., esteemed themselves, sometimes not without reason, the salt of the Assembly. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, John Locke, having completed his philosophic mission, had distinguished himself as the literary vindicator of the principles asserted by the Revolution of 1688. At Oates in Essex, the country seat of his friend, Sir Francis Masham, he met admirers who urged him to go into Parliament; he was, he said, a writer, a thinker, rather than a speaker; besides he was getting old; he disliked London; he had no great fondness for Parliament men; he possessed, however, a nephew, a young barrister, in whom he was interested, and to whom he begged his well-wishers to transfer the support and interest they had offered himself. This was Peter King, the son of a well-to-do grocer at Exeter, so highly esteemed by his dissenting brethren, that they were for subscribing a sum to send his sharp son to the university; before he was twenty, young King had written a learned treatise on the discipline and ritual of the Primitive Church; in this he had cleverly expressed the Puritan desire for reunion with the National Establishment, and their dissatisfaction with the recently passed Toleration Act, as derogatory to their religious position and claim. Locke discouraged the academic projects of his young relative, advising him instead to go with him abroad, and to pursue his studies under his own guidance at Leyden. The philosopher's patronage and the nonconformist vote brought Peter King in 1700 into the House of Commons as member for Beeralston; his

brother member was another future Lord Chancellor, William Cowper. John Locke, by this time a high Whig official and generally well-to-do, supplied young King with money, on condition that he would not allow his duties at the Bar to prevent his pushing his way in the House; Locke obtained from King a promise to stay in London, not to go on circuit, adding, "You will not, you shall not, repent it." That Locke understood the House of Commons, though he had never been in it, may be seen from another piece of advice: "Do not speak at all for some time, however fair may seem your opportunity, but while you keep your mouth shut have your eyes open to see the temper, to observe the motions of the House, diligently to remark the skill of management, carefully to watch the first secret beginnings of things and their tendencies." In February, 1701, Locke could congratulate his protégé on having broken the ice, and succeeded so well; "but now that you can speak, let them see you can hold your peace also, and let nothing but some point of law, of which you are master, call you up again." Whenever the member for Beeralston mingled in debate, he largely rehearsed what he had previously gone through with Locke. King's best speech was delivered when he was Attorney-General in the Recruiting Bill discussion, in support of an amendment that only those who had no civil calling, should be pressed to become soldiers. King had made a study of canonical law; in his defence of Whiston for anti-Trinitarianism, he astounded the Court first by his ecclesiastical learning, secondly by his refusal to receive any fee for himself or for his junior, Lechmere.

Sir Joseph Jekyll was another of the old Whig lawyers; of a temper, more aggressive than King, this descendant of London merchants, appointed by Somers when Chancellor, Chief Justice of Chester, had refused to quit this appointment on the death of William III.; the demise of the Crown

who stood a little outside the conventional party lines, was a group of lawyers. During more than a generation following the Long Parliament, the scriptural and legal qualities, which it then took on, continued to colour the oratory at St. Stephen's. These characteristics had disappeared when the Hanoverian dynasty was established. The lawyers themselves, proscribed though they had been in the House so far back as Edward III., esteemed themselves, sometimes not without reason, the salt of the Assembly. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, John Locke, having completed his philosophic mission, had distinguished himself as the literary vindicator of the principles asserted by the Revolution of 1688. At Oates in Essex, the country seat of his friend, Sir Francis Masham, he met admirers who urged him to go into Parliament; he was, he said, a writer, a thinker, rather than a speaker; besides he was getting old; he disliked London; he had no great fondness for Parliament men; he possessed, however, a nephew, a young barrister, in whom he was interested, and to whom he begged his well-wishers to transfer the support and interest they had offered himself. This was Peter King, the son of a well-to-do grocer at Exeter, so highly esteemed by his dissenting brethren, that they were for subscribing a sum to send his sharp son to the university; before he was twenty, young King had written a learned treatise on the discipline and ritual of the Primitive Church; in this he had cleverly expressed the Puritan desire for reunion with the National Establishment, and their dissatisfaction with the recently passed Toleration Act, as derogatory to their religious position and claim. Locke discouraged the academic projects of his young relative, advising him instead to go with him abroad, and to pursue his studies under his own guidance at Leyden. The philosopher's patronage and the nonconformist vote brought Peter King in 1700 into the House of Commons as member for

did not, he insisted, vacate the office to which he clung so stoutly, that the collective vote of both Houses could not remove him. A thoroughly independent member, he opposed a chief article in the impeachment of Harley, Lord Oxford, in the face of Walpole's displeasure and the frowns of the whole Treasury Bench. As a member of St. Stephen's, Jekyll was nearly the first to associate his House with the practical interest in social reform; he perpetuated the spirit of Queen Anne's ecclesiastical legislation by promoting a fund for the augmentation of poor livings. Hogarth, by his pencil, had first aroused the national mind to the horrors of the gin-drinking which came in, with the Revolution, from Holland. Francis Bacon, when Attorney-General in 1615, had made what he called an attempt "to claim and reclaim the evil of bewitching duels," by proceeding, not in the House but in the Star Chamber, against the sender and the seconder of a challenge. This puppetry of honour had, he said, been condemned by eastern and western nations, by a council of bashaws, as well as by benches of bishops. Bacon reprimanded an individual; he did not eradicate the institution. So with Jekyll, who elicited a fine sentiment from Steele, that it was more honourable to be a second to prevent, than to promote murder, but did not affect the usage itself. Jekyll was Master of the Rolls; in all the dignity of his official robes, he enforced his moral precepts on the House. An independent member, he secured his return to St. Stephen's by the unpaid offices of friends in good position; that caused Lady Mary Wortley Montague to remonstrate with her husband on his electoral outlay in 1714—"when so many of our friends bring in their Parliament men without trouble or cost." Jekyll, an earnest rather than an effective speaker, laboured in the House to stem the current of commercial corruption. On the Bench, during the South Sea Bubble period, he had countenanced an action, brought by a ruined investor, against

the promoters of a company for extracting oil from radishes; in the House, he gave his full reasons for his policy as a judge.

A certain judge of this period, visiting a prisoner whom he had just convicted, recognised in him the companion of his youthful excesses. Where were the others of the old Oriel set? "Ah, my lord, they are all hanged but for myself and your lordship." The judge, whose youth offered this retrospect, was John Holt, son of a Gray's Inn bencher, a native of Thame in Oxfordshire; he was first returned for Beeralston at the same time as Serjeant Maynard, who elected to sit for Plymouth, which had also made him its member; Holt's first speeches were delivered during the debate on William III.'s accession, to the same effect as those of Maynard; afterwards, as Lord Chief Justice, Holt, in the Aylesbury case, resisted alike the Commons and the Lords; the matter, he said, was one for the law not the Parliament; every qualified voter had a right to record his franchise; "therefore," thundered Holt, "go back to your chair, Mr. Speaker, in five minutes, or depend upon it I will send you to Newgate"; but a judicious commentator on this anecdote grieves to pronounce it a pure invention.* Two more of the old school independent lawyers in the House were Henry Pollexfen, alternately denounced by the Court and country party, and so presumably honest, Sir George Treby, who, both at St. Stephen's and in Westminster Hall, had maintained the right of private traders as regards the East Indies, notwithstanding the patents given to the company by Charles II.

Sir Robert Raymond, alike in the House and at the Bar, was always a courtier. Another legal agent of the Crown, abler than Raymond, was Heneage Finch, son of the high-flying Tory Peer, the Earl of Nottingham, nephew of him who

* The Journals of the Commons contain no mention of the incident. Townsend, *History of the House of Commons*, Vol. II., p. 69.

had been Lord-Keeper for Charles I. The elder Finch had been called the English Roscius; the musical eloquence of the younger procured for him the epithet of the "silver-tongued"; fresh from Christ Church, when only twenty-nine, he had been made Solicitor-General by Charles II. in 1667; removed by James nine years later, Finch made himself one of the most noted orators in chancery practice, as well as a Tory leader in the House of Commons, constant at every later point in his career to the principles, avowed by him, when conducting the prosecution of Algernon Sidney and of William Russell.

In the second Parliament of James II., a son of the fourth Lord North, Sir Dudley North, had been returned for Banbury; engagement in the Turkish trade in London, and some years' commercial occupation at Constantinople, had given him great wealth, and unrivalled experience and authority in all commercial matters; though a pliant courtier, he was far-sighted and clear-sighted enough to anticipate, both as a speaker in the House, and as a writer on trade, some of the chief discoveries of Adam Smith; he did not himself survive to sit in any of the Hanoverian Parliaments; his brother, Roger North, had a place on the Opposition benches during the Whig administration of George I.; his function was to give a silent vote against the Government, whenever a division was called, and to spend his leisure on his Norfolk estate of Rougham, in composing biographies of prominent contemporaries, which, though generally stilted in their expression and trivial in their observation, are valuable as mines of personal detail concerning men of whom nothing else is known. If, some fifty years later, Johnson's biographer, James Boswell, had succeeded in finding a seat at St. Stephen's, he might have gained a position in the House, something like that which Roger North actually filled.

# CHAPTER IX.

## WALPOLE'S PERFECTING OF THE HOUSE.

Fluctuations in the representatives at St. Stephen's—Small towns and Parliamentary wages—First signs of general appreciation of being a Parliamentary borough—The enfranchising power of the Sovereign—Scotch and Irish M.Ps. —Fining members for non-attendance—The average attendance at St. Stephen's —Sir Robert Howard and absentees—Coinciding of assizes, &c., with Parliamentary sittings—Jeremy Bentham's daily attendance table—Sir Robert Walpole day by day strengthens his position—Brings accusations against Harley and Bolingbroke—Vote of impeachment against them carried—The new Parliament of 1715—A large Whig majority—Bolingbroke's description of the Hanoverians—The Opposition chiefly Jacobites—Pulteney and the Opposition—"Walpole and Townshend, not Townshend and Walpole"—The charges against Harley and Bolingbroke—Walpole's moderation the secret of his success—Walpole's finance—The Riot Act—Walpole and Shippen—Their high opinion of each other—Comparison between Shippen and the Right Hon. J. W. Henley—Shippen's career—The Septennial Act—Strongly opposed by the Tory peers—Its rejection moved by Lord Guernsey and Shippen—Supported by Steele—Long harangue by Archibald Hutcheson, member for Hastings—Second reading passed by a majority of one hundred and twenty-two—Speaker Onslow's opinion of the measure—Later attempt to repeal the Septennial Act —Walpole's opposition to Townshend and Stanhope—Walpole as an ally of Shippen—The Peerage Bill—Probable results, had it been passed—Attack on the measure by Steele—Hampden, Craggs, and Robert Pitt also speak on it—Strongly opposed by Walpole—Rejected by a large majority—The South Sea scheme—Details of the scheme—Boom in shares—Bursting of the bubble—Aislabie, the Craggs, and others expelled from the House—Resignation of Sunderland and death of Stanhope—Compensation to some of the directors.

THE succession of George I. to Anne took place in the seventh year after the legislative union of Scotland with England had been accomplished. The fourth Parliament of Great Britain was now in session. The House of Commons

had been increased by forty-five members for Scottish counties and boroughs; its numbers had now reached the figure at which they were to remain till the organic changes of the nineteenth century. Hitherto, this total had been constantly fluctuating. Under Edward I. the citizens and burgesses, who sat together with the barons, amounted to two hundred; with the seventy-four shire knights summoned, there was thus the material for a House of Commons of close upon three hundred members. That was the total actually fulfilled under the later Plantagenets. Before the fifteenth century had closed these figures had declined; one after another small towns, groaning under the burden of parliamentary wages, had successfully sought relief from the burden of representation. Richard II. recognised the costly patriotism of Colchester in repairing its fortifications with stone and lime, by relieving its inhabitants for five years from sending any burgess to the House of Commons; the same exemption was granted to other constituencies, especially in Northumberland during the Scotch wars, as well as to Lancashire during a prolonged period of pleaded "poverty and impotence."

During the Tudor period are visible the first signs of general appreciation of being a parliamentary borough. At the request of the neighbourhood, Henry VIII. allotted twelve members to Wales, with four afterwards for the County Palatine and the City of Chester. Throughout this period it was part of the Crown's prerogative, as understood by all Henry's children, to decide what new boroughs should be enfranchised, or in what old constituencies the franchise would be revived. From the reign of Henry VIII. to that of Charles I. the Royal writs had added fifty-seven members to the Assembly. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries St. Stephen's claimed and exercised for itself the enfranchising authority, before this uncomplainingly vested in the Sovereign. But when, soon after his Restoration, Charles II. presented the

House with his two nominees for Newark, these Royal additions met with a reception that did not encourage this Sovereign or any of his successors to repeat the process. Not only from the first Hanoverian King, but continuously since the disappearance of the Stuarts, St. Stephen's remained, till 1800, substantially identical with what it had been in the seventeenth century. The admission of the Irish members after Pitt's Union Act imported into St. Stephen's an element which was no sequel of the Scottish Union Act. The Scotch M.Ps. generally preserved the national reputation for discreet silence. Of the members from the sister island, more than two-thirds never missed the chance of catching the Speaker's eye—that influence has proved contagious.

The tightening of the Speaker's control is not the only piece of parliamentary discipline introduced or emphasized during the period of the struggle between Crown and Commons; under Elizabeth fines had been imposed on absentee burgesses or shire knights; on May 5th, 1641, the Journals of St. Stephen's contain an entry that all members, not regularly attending, shall, unless sick, be adjudged guilty of contempt; that they shall be proceeded against as unworthy to sit at all; and that, without special license, no member is to leave London. Nearly three months before that resolution a quorum of forty had been declared necessary to make a House; the Long Parliament House sometimes consisted of five hundred; the attendance never seems quite to have reached half that number; it averaged about eighty. The voice of Sir Robert Howard alone, already mentioned in these pages, was raised against the severe treatment of truant senators; nor, he said, was it physically possible for the attendance to be larger; "unless you build your house bigger it will not hold us." The drastic expedients to replenish the empty benches scarcely proved successful; they were in advance of the current opinion of the House as of the

country; the Speaker saved his prerogative from ridicule by wisely declining to issue it against the absentees; in 1695, by one hundred and eighty-three to one hundred and twenty-two, the Commons rejected a proposal that the assizes and quarter sessions should be held at a time when they would not interfere with the business at St. Stephen's. Generally it may be said that up to the nineteenth century the cost, the difficulty, and the danger of locomotion, and the absence of the pressure which an organized opinion could alone exercise, made attendance at St. Stephen's a matter of personal option; thus, the member for Essex, while belonging to the House six or seven years, only appeared in it once during all that time; that is one of those cases which suggested to Jeremy Bentham a general daily attendance table, and a further arrangement, by which every member on his election was to deposit a sum of money, of which he was to receive back from the clerk at the end of the year two pounds for every sitting he had assisted in; the forfeited balance was to go to a fund to be distributed among the more punctual M.Ps.; the proposal was at least disinterested, for Bentham, though brought forward by the first Lord Lansdowne, never actually entered the House. The call of the House is often mentioned in the entries of the Georgian period; its penalties were seldom enforced; it soon lapsed into entire desuetude.

Most of the interest furnished by St. Stephen's in the opening year of the Georgian period was of the personal sort. Walpole day by day confirmed his position as leader of the House; he showed the same adroitness in hitting off its humours and prejudices as he did in commending himself to the new dynasty. The report of the secret committee, enquiring into the Jacobite associations of the Harley-Bolingbroke Government, gave him the opportunity of indulging his personal feeling against his old Eton rival, St. John;

words, he said, were wanting to him to express the villainy of the last Frenchified ministry. Only two members of the Tory Opposition—Sir Thomas Hanmer and Hungerford—pleaded for mitigation of the decision to impeach or for arrest in its execution. Stanhope, in a conciliatory speech, expressed his regret that the milder suggestions could not be entertained. The vote of impeachment was carried by two hundred and eighty against one hundred and sixty in the House of Commons. The impeachment itself of Bolingbroke first, and of others afterwards, was at once brought up by Walpole to the Lords.

The House of Commons, which had been elected under Anne, remained in existence for six months after the Queen's death. Early in 1715 it was dissolved. The elections gave the Whigs a decisive majority in the new House. Bolingbroke, writing to a friend in a letter which, though still existing in manuscript, never seems to have been published,* described George I. as, at his accession, bent on taking the Whigs into his favour, but also on oppressing no set of men who acknowledged the new dynasty and submitted quietly to it. But the point to which party organization had been carried, as well as the political conditions of the time, recognised from the first the sure promise contained in the House, and rendered any amalgamation or compromise impossible. On the Speaker's right hand were the ministerial Whigs. On the left sat the Jacobite Tories. The former not only supported the Townshend and Walpole Administration, they constituted the one bulwark of the Hanoverian monarchy. The personal authority and prestige of the Sovereign were never more depressed than under the first two Georges. But a Stuart restoration would have meant a Papist on the Throne and a re-establishment of the Roman Church in the country. Against both of these things the nation, as well as the two

* *Parliamentary History*, Vol. XL., p. 506.

Chambers, had fully resolved. Upon that determination Walpole was able to work and raise the superstructure of his policy. Neither, therefore, at St. Stephen's nor in the constituencies could the issue ever have been doubtful. Bolingbroke exactly took the measure of Pulteney's character and truly discerned his master passion when he compared the political organization against Walpole to be the scaffolding that sustained Pulteney's personal animus against his old colleague, whose political opinions he always professed to share. "When," said Pulteney, "I have accomplished Walpole's overthrow, I shall retire into that hospital of invalids, the House of Peers." The words convey the motive of the parliamentary career which was closed with the earldom of Bath; they also compendiously suggest the main incidents of his course.

Walpole's often-quoted saying, that he intended the firm to be Walpole and Townshend, not Townshend and Walpole, gives a true idea of his progress onwards from the accession of the first George to the first place of all. Entering the Government as paymaster of the forces and of Chelsea Hospital, he had no seat in the Cabinet, a body of eight members, only one of whom was a Commoner; his influence from the first seems nearly to have equalled that of Townshend, the principal Secretary of State—for all practical purposes, Premier; his natural and acquired adaptability to the temper of St. Stephen's soon confirmed his position as its natural leader. In the autumn of 1715, this plain Norfolk squire, with the top-boots, and the full-flavoured conversation, reached the place for which his skill in figures had long since destined him; he became First Commissioner of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer; the latter office had recently been held by Lord Halifax and by Lord Carlisle; in 1717 for a few months it was held by Lord Stanhope, before Aislabie's appointment took effect; with that

exception, since Walpole's day, the Chancellor has always been a member of the Lower House. Of the impeachments which followed the secret committee, it is enough to say that they enabled Walpole to gratify his ancient grudge against Bolingbroke, Harley, and others, as well as to fix public attention by several most effective speeches such as, at the present day, would introduce votes of censure. The committee report took Walpole five hours to read; it was read again by the clerk at the table next day. The desertion of their allies; the understanding with the Pretender and the French King, which caused the betrayal of the honour and interest of England. Such were the counts in the indictment which, pressed in many forms by Walpole, gave him the opportunity of rallying the party round him, and of posing as a patriotic statesman before a nation ready to believe the worst about the late "Frenchified Government." The impeachments, set on foot by the Whig House of 1715, against the negotiators of the Utrecht peace, had been preceded in 1700 by the arraignment of Halifax, Oxford, Portland, by the Tory House of 1701 for the Spanish Partition treaties of the previous year.

Since then political impeachments by the House of Commons before the House of Lords have been unknown.* That is the direct consequence of the tradition, which Walpole succeeded in engrafting upon the constitution. The collective responsibility of the whole Cabinet to the Commons; the full and final establishment of the principle that the King can do no wrong; this was Walpole's special work; to impeach a body of men is not less impossible than Burke found it to draw up an indictment against a nation. While under

* As Mr. John Morley in his Walpole monograph (p. 43) points out, Warren Hastings in 1788 was charged with misgovernment, Melville in 1804 with malversation of public money. Neither of these impeachments was therefore political.

the first two Georges, was being struck the bargain, that made the English Sovereign King of Hanover and a Whig Parliament King of England; meanwhile Walpole used the House of Commons to gain a mastery alike over Crown and country, greater than had yet fallen to any single person.

Walpole's practical success with the House and with the country, is to be attributed not only to his consummate ability as well as thorough comprehension of his age, but also to the ballast of mediocrity, without which the greatest genius has often proved a partial failure in English public life; that is the blend, which, at a later day, made Lord North, Lord Melbourne, Sir Robert Peel, and Lord Palmerston, successively the first parliamentary forces of their day. Walpole's fiscal policy took off the duties upon more than a hundred British exports, and upon forty imports; before he quitted office English exports had risen from £6,000,000 to £12,000,000; the Colonial trade, at a single bound, increased first from £15,000 to £500,000; by 1750 it had become £2,000,000; the privileges granted by this minister to Georgia and the Carolinas in the matter of rice exportation, drove Italian and Egyptian rice from the market; amongst the beneficent results to the Mother country of this Colonial policy, was the growth of Birmingham, Bristol, and Manchester, to something like their present importance. The shrewd common-sense of the nation to which he trusted, had recognised from the first the sure promise contained in the detail of Walpole's administration. Like all the great chiefs of St. Stephen's, he had become the pilot of the country long before he was installed in the leadership of the House; his ascendancy at St. Stephen's was so well sustained, that in his third year, the House only divided once. In 1715, under Walpole's Chancellorship of the Exchequer, the House took the first step in the legislation, consolidated the next year in the Septennial Act.

Notwithstanding the demise of the Crown, it had been arranged that Anne's last House of Commons should be continued for six months. The elections, which then came, had given the Whig ministry a large majority; there had, however, been riots in the midlands so serious as to call for the passing of a Riot Act; this measure provided that any Justice of the Peace may disperse by proclamation a crowd of twelve persons, and that, if these remain together for an hour after the order, they are guilty of felony. From the absence of any entry in the Journals of the House, referring to this statute, it may be supposed to have passed without debate or division. Its chief issues were raised again over the Septennial Bill; then it was that the party feelings, which had been held in check over the Riot Act, burst forth with uncontrolled vehemence.

"We differ in nearly all things in which men can differ; he is for King George; I am for King James III.; but Robin Walpole and I are the two honestest men in England." The compliment was returned in full by him, to whom it was addressed; "if," said Walpole repeatedly, "there be any member of this House who is, I will not say incorrupt, but incorruptible, that man is Shippen; the fellows with long cravats (*e.g.* Sir John Rushout, Gibbon, and Sandys) only desire places under one King or another; if it rained appointments from Heaven, Shippen would not trouble to pick one up." To those who personally knew St. Stephen's during the first half of the Victorian epoch, the best idea of Shippen will be given when it is said that his portraits present a man whose appearance at once suggests that of the Right Honourable J. W. Henley, who represented Oxfordshire for something like a generation. The face, gnarled like the roots of an oak, the open intellectual brow, the strong chin, the development of those organs, which phrenologically denote in equal parts prejudice and courage; these are features, whereon both

men were not wanting. The Victorian member always spoke with vigour as well as simplicity; his Georgian predecessor was as famous for good humour as for incorruptibility. A favourite at St. Stephen's with all, he treated every subject of debate in an animated and amusing way, though, according to Horace Walpole, he marred the effect of his rugged eloquence by the habit of placing his glove before his mouth. Descended from a north country stock, Shippen went from Stockport Grammar School, first as a foundation scholar, to Westminster, afterwards to Trinity, Cambridge; he had been returned in 1707 for the Sussex pocket borough of Bramber; he had become member for Newton in Lancashire, when, in 1715, he led the Opposition to the measure, substituting seven years for three as the lifetime of a Parliament. A general election, during the early days of the Hanoverian dynasty, would certainly have meant national disturbances, almost undistinguishable from civil war; the act was compared by its opponents to the Long Parliament's declaration of its indestructibility; both were equally usurpations by the House of the rights belonging to the people. As a fact, under George I., the constituencies were not the custodians of popular liberty; in boroughs, members were returned by corporations of often venal freemen; in counties, by the great territorial Peers. General elections chiefly served as opportunities for the assertion of their influence by the Crown and the Lords. Whatever secured durability to the Commons, as the Septennial Act did, strengthened their influence. Whatever reminded men of the dynastic changes accomplished since 1688, excited bitterness and discontent; the license of a general election was justly feared by all lovers of the public peace. It was, therefore, moved in the Lords to continue the existing Parliament for seven years. The Septennial Bill thus brought in, evoked strong protests from the Tory Peers; in April, it was sent down to the Commons; its rejection,

before it had even been read a first time, was at once proposed by Lord Guernsey, and seconded by Shippen. Eventually the measure went on to the second reading; this was carried after a discussion, which lasted from two in the afternoon till close upon midnight. Steele's expulsion in the reign of Anne from St. Stephen's amid insulting cries of "Tatler" for his Hanoverian pamphlet, has already been mentioned; with the Whig majority under George, he had reappeared; together with Hampden, among private, Stanhope and Aislabie among official, members, he spoke in favour of the Bill; according to one account, he adduced as an argument for it the approval of the still-breathing chief of the Whig party, Lord Somers; Somers died on the day the measure passed; nor does it seem likely that his opinion of it, as the greatest support possible to the liberty of the country, actually was expressed before his last moments. Steele's speech, however, was a lively performance, doing much to brighten a dull debate. The discussion was signalised by the deliverance of the longest discourse as yet known in the House of Commons; this was from Archibald Hutcheson, the member for Hastings; the summary of his words in the parliamentary history occupies more than twenty-five closely-printed pages.* In a letter to Walpole's brother, Horace, the English Ambassador in Paris, Moyle had said that Lechmere, the most captious, as Hutcheson was the most verbose member of the day, would move Heaven and earth to upset the Bill; Lechmere had already led the course of coffee-housed enunciation of it, as well as organised the host of hostile petitions. Moyle's forecast of the division was, however, closely verified in the last week of April (1716), in a House of between four and five hundred, by two hundred and eighty-four to one hundred and sixty-two votes, the Bill passed its second reading.

The most modern and valuable of expert testimonies for the

* *Parliamentary History*, Vol. VII., pp. 339-367.

measure, is that of Speaker Onslow, who declared that the legislation of 1716 brought in the emancipation of the House of Commons from its former dependence on the hereditary chamber and on the Crown. The discontent and abuse which accompanied the passing of the Bill, continued intermittently throughout the reign of the first George, and during part of that of George II.; on March 13th, 1734, the Tory member for Warwick, William Bromley, opened the most brilliant discussion, long witnessed at St. Stephen's, with a motion for repealing the Septennial Act, and for securing the more frequent meeting of Parliaments. That the whole voting power of the House might be mustered on this occasion, before the discussion began, it was ordered that the Serjeant-at-Arms should go with the mace into Westminster Hall, and all other places of resort adjacent thereto, to summon absentees to the service of the House.

During most of this period, for some years after 1717, Walpole kept himself either outside the House or else in Opposition. Stanhope and Townshend wished to convince him and the country that he was not indispensable. Walpole was not the man patiently to endure the slight. His attitude throughout this period, though generally inconsistent with his profession, did not at all interfere with his influence over the House. He resisted the Mutiny Bill, necessary as it was for carrying on the Government of the country. Still disclaiming any thought of embarrassing his old friend, Stanhope, who now acted as Premier, Walpole actually united with the Jacobite leader, Shippen, in supporting the charges of peculation, brought against Cadogan. Stanhope, more liberal than his age, would have relaxed the Corporation and Test Acts. Guided by Sunderland, he only attempted the repeal of the Schism Act, passed by Bolingbroke to crush the dissenters. Walpole, against all the principles he had ever professed, was again in opposition to Stanhope; so, too, he continued to be

when ministers proposed to abolish the restrictions on the occasional conformity, by which nonconformists, bowing in the House of Rimmon, had been allowed to qualify for public office.

On December 18th, 1719, began in the House of Commons the debate on the second reading of the Peerage Bill, sent down from the Upper House; this measure originated in the fear of Sunderland, then out of favour with the Prince of Wales, the future George II., lest the first act of the new reign should be to strengthen the Tory minority in the Lords, after the example of Queen Anne, who had created twelve new Peers to pass the Treaty of Utrecht. The measure severely restricted the Royal prerogative of conferring new titles of nobility. When George I. came to the Throne, the House of Lords consisted of two hundred and seven members, all kinds of Peerages included. The new proposal would have enacted that these figures should never be increased by more than six. Such a policy would have reversed the tendency and largely have cancelled the results of centuries of political struggle; the Lords would have become an unchangeable caste, more powerful than Crown or Commons; the Sovereign could coerce the Commons by a dissolution; the Commons could coerce the Crown by refusing supplies; the Peers would have been beyond the reach of modification by either of these powers, or by any circumstances whatever. The attack upon the measure was opened by Sir Richard Steele, now, as we have already seen, after his expulsion, re-established in the House. The Bill might change this freed State into the worst of all tyrannies—that of an aristocracy. The prerogative could do no hurt when ministers did their duty. But a settled number of Peers might easily abuse their power, and could not easily be called to account. Few members present during the discussion did not actively take some part in it. Of the descendants of the Long Parliament

measure, is that of Speaker Onslow, who declared that the legislation of 1716 brought in the emancipation of the House of Commons from its former dependence on the hereditary chamber and on the Crown. The discontent and abuse which accompanied the passing of the Bill, continued intermittently throughout the reign of the first George, and during part of that of George II.; on March 13th, 1734, the Tory member for Warwick, William Bromley, opened the most brilliant discussion, long witnessed at St. Stephen's, with a motion for repealing the Septennial Act, and for securing the more frequent meeting of Parliaments. That the whole voting power of the House might be mustered on this occasion, before the discussion began, it was ordered that the Serjeant-at-Arms should go with the mace into Westminster Hall, and all other places of resort adjacent thereto, to summon absentees to the service of the House.

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men, the Hampdens, who now represented Buckinghamshire, criticising Steele, agreed with Secretary Craggs, that the limitations imposed upon the Peers would diminish rather than increase their power. In the order of debate, Steele was followed by the bearer of a famous name, which now first appears in the lists of St. Stephen's. Robert Pitt, who then sat for Old Sarum, struck the keynote of the opinions his more illustrious kinsman was afterwards, with greater emphasis, to advocate.* The speech, which did what very few speeches in the House are known to have done—influence votes and convert supporters of the Bill into opponents—was that of Walpole. The Norfolk squire, when in London, always looked at his gamekeeper's report from Houghton before opening the red-leather Cabinet boxes; he had, however, a good library; he liked to show the House that he had not forgotten his Eton classics; he opened his remarks with a reference to the wise Romans, who placed the temple of fame behind that of virtue, by arriving at which fame was only to be reached. The Bill before the House would reverse all this by taking away the most powerful incentive, virtue, and making it impossible to attain honour but "through the winding sheet of an old decrepit lord or the grave of a noble family extinct." Surprising might it well seem that the Bill should be promoted by one, not long since seated at St. Stephen's, but now in the Peers and desirous to shut the door after him (Stanhope). The argument of Walpole's which really told with the House was, that whatever the Lords gained must be at the expense both of Commons and King; that the proposed decision once taken, the Lords would allow no chance of reconsidering it. The only precedent was a

* The Pitt who came first in this famous lineage, was a clergyman, rector of Blandford. His son Thomas (1653-1776) governed Madras and bought the great diamond. His elder son was the great Lord Chatham; his younger, Thomas (1688-1729), became the first Lord Londonderry.

temporary expedient under Anne of creating twelve peerages to carry the Peace of Utrecht. The present was a proposal to give the Government a permanent majority in the Lords; and that upon no proved plea of necessity, for the ease with which the measure had been driven through "another place" showed the ministerial ascendancy already to be unchallenged there. Finally, the Bill would destroy the balance between the three branches of the Legislature; it would, therefore, subvert the whole Constitution. Arthur Onslow, the future Speaker, did not himself hear Walpole; he records, however, the undoubted conviction of the time, when he called irresistible Walpole's remark, that the measure deprived Englishmen of the constitutional reward of great qualities and actions in the service of the Commonwealth. At a quarter-past eight in the evening of December 1st, amid great excitement, the division was taken in a House of four hundred and fifty. The measure was lost by two hundred and sixty-nine to one hundred and seventy-seven. This was less a party than a personal triumph. The promoters of the Bill had made free use of the King's name; it was the only way of preventing the mad tricks with the Peerage, which would certainly be played by the King's successor. The Whig leaders in the Peers, at a meeting held at Devonshire House, refused to be stimulated against the measure. The only followers on whom Walpole could count were a handful of country gentlemen, chiefly East Anglian members, who were at last brought to resent the proposal as an insult to their order. One of these was wound up to the point of protesting that, though for himself he had no chance of a title, he would be no party to shutting the door of the Upper House in the face of his family.

The next episode in Walpole's House of Commons' career cannot properly be understood without some reference to the development of English finance. The moneyed interest,

which supported Walpole, was still comparatively a novelty at St. Stephen's. Since, and even during, the reign of Queen Anne, it had, however, become sufficiently important to admit the discharge of public liabilities by means of loans. The amount of the debt and the rate of interest upon it disquieted alike Parliament and the country. A speech on the subject, made by a Mr. Brodrick, gave expression to the prevailing sentiment, and inspired financiers of both parties with the policy of diminishing the capital of the debt and of reducing the interest payable on its balance.

Already, in 1711, Harley, when Lord-Treasurer, had dealt with a floating debt of ten millions by forming the creditors into a company, the interest being secured on the customs; the promise of a monopoly of the commercial advantages secured to England by the Utrecht Treaty was the motive which, in 1717, enabled Walpole to secure the nation's creditors' consent to a like scheme of funding. The first beginnings of the South Sea Company had been in Harley's day. That corporation was now a large creditor of the Government. Walpole, in 1717, began reduction of the national debt by, among other expedients, inducing the Bank of England and the South Sea Company itself to accept a lower rate of interest, and to advance some five millions more for paying such creditors as refused the reduction of interest.

In the King's speech at the close of the session of 1719, the reduction both of the interest and the debt itself was specially mentioned. In 1720, therefore, ministers were ready to give a favourable hearing to the proposal of the South Sea director, Blunt. This, in effect, was that the company should buy £32,000,000 of the national debt at five per cent. interest, instead of the seven or eight per cent. which the State had actually been paying. The first result of this transaction was the immediate rise of South Sea shares to £1,000 each; then came the reaction, and the equally repaid

fall to £135. This is not the place for a repetition of the social history of the South Sea Bubble—familiar as its incidents are to all who have looked into the popular art or literature of the period. It is enough here to say that the episode supplies the single instance in which an Administration, ruling through the House of Commons, connived at an enterprise, neither irrational nor unsound in its idea, but infected with rottenness by the issue of bogus shares for speculative purposes. Walpole, during this scandalous period, had not been in office when the arrangement between ministers and the directors was made. As an onlooker, he had warned both of the catastrophe in store. His predictions were more than realised. In an evil moment the South Sea directors began legal proceedings against a rival corporation, which had committed a breach of the law in issuing shares. It was a suicidal course. Once the rottenness of these speculations was revealed in the single instance, the whole gambling structure fell with a crash. The difference between the figures to which the South Sea shares had risen and those to which they fell is the measure of the ruin that involved all those concerned. Yet it required a retrospective Act of Parliament and a Statutory creation of a new offence to punish the directors or to relieve the sufferers. The parliamentary instrument of retributive justice who forced the transactions upon the attention of the House was a speculative old soldier, a social favourite at St. Stephen's, General Ross; he boasted of having, in his own words, "brought to light the deepest villainy and fraud that hell ever contrived to ruin a nation." Walpole alone translated into legislative action the indignation which Ross had tried to express. The private property of the directors, to the amount of £2,000,000, was distributed among sufferers; the £7,000,000, due from the company, were remitted; the capital which thus remained to the company yielded a dividend of some thirty-three per cent. to be

distributed among the shareholders. Walpole carried all these proposals easily through the House. They placed him at the head of all living financiers; their healing results made him the leader alike of the Commons and of the country. Aislabie, Chancellor of the Exchequer, was examined with all the form of a legal trial by the House of Commons, was found guilty, and summarily expelled; he was followed into seclusion by Sir Richard Caswell, by Sir Robert Chaplin, and by the first member of Germano-Jewish extraction who ever sat in the House, Sir Theodore Jansen. Of the two Craggs the elder, the Postmaster-General, committed suicide; the younger, the Secretary of State, died of the small-pox. Stanhope also rather mysteriously expired during the February of 1721. Sunderland, though pronounced innocent by the committee of enquiry, was so morally tainted that he gave up public life. The South Sea enquiries and the measures growing out of them long dragged on in the House. They possessed the interest of first introducing to the public the famous name of Gibbon. Half a century, indeed, was to elapse before the historian of the Roman empire became member for Liskeard. His grandfather, a wealthy merchant, an authority on finance, a commissioner of customs, as well as a South Sea director, while still sitting in the House, appealed for the relief of the ruined directors in a speech, which produced a good effect at the time, and to which his grandson looked back with pious pride.

# CHAPTER X.

## WALPOLE'S MANAGEMENT OF THE HOUSE.

George I.'s tribute to Walpole—Walpole's opponents—Sunderland—His policy, and death—Tory collapse at the General Election—Walpole master of the House of Commons—Atterbury's plot—Return of Bolingbroke—Spencer Compton first "sent for" by George II.—His incompetency—Walpole "sent for"—The new King's Civil List—Shippen's opposition—Late sittings of the House—Speaker Onslow once in the Chair for seventeen hours—Length of sittings gradually increasing since Revolution—Adjournments for meals—An order concerning motions—The inconvenience of day sittings—Bishop Burnet for shorter sessions—Long vacations at Christmas and Easter—Instances of long sittings—Onslow and the Speakership—Speaker Norton's independence—Character of Onslow—Walpole's attempts to conciliate the Tories—Walpole's Excise scheme—Attacked by Pulteney and his friends in the *Craftsman*—Walpole drops the Excise Bill—Place Bill passed—Dismissal of Duke of Bolton and Lord Cobham from the Army—Jealousy amongst the Opposition—Pelham—Sir John Barnard—The elections of 1734—Coke and Morden defeated—A decreased Whig majority—Philip Dormer Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield—George Selwyn—Walpole and dissenters—Gibson superseded by Potter in the Primacy—Lord Polworth—Walpole's chief supporters—Resignation of Walpole on the Chippenham election petition.

"I PARTED with him once," said George I. in April, 1722, "I will never willingly part with him again." The Royal tribute to Walpole as a minister is the more noteworthy because the statesman's ascendancy, like that of the House of Commons itself, whose epitome and concentration, as well as rule, the minister was, had been gained at the cost of the Crown, as well as of the Court. The first indication of Walpole's power over these hostile forces had been the appointment of his

kinsman, Townshend, as Secretary of State on Stanhope's death. After the South Sea episode, which left Walpole first minister, in reality not less than in name, as well as master not more of the House of Commons than of the country, his own rivals were Cadogan, Carlton, Carteret, and Sunderland. The last of these, after almost as many party alternations as those of his father-in-law, the Duke of Marlborough, whose political faith was regulated by the military usefulness of his State associates, had now closely identified himself with the Tories; his present policy was an immediate dissolution because, at this moment, the Whigs were without money to win the elections, and the Tories would well repay any sums laid out upon them, by hushing up the South Sea scandals. Corruption, in fact, seemed to the Tory convert as natural an instrument in politics as to the born Whig. Sunderland died during the general election; before constituencies had returned their full answer to the appeal now made, the Tory collapse was assured. On October 9th, 1722, the first meeting of the new House of Commons showed Walpole to be in possession of a majority, on which, for any policy he chose to bring forward, he might absolutely rely. Atterbury, the friend of Swift and Bishop of Rochester, though a Jacobite, was always a Protestant. In that he resembled his Royalist predecessor, Laud, who was never nearer to the Church of Rome than was his master, Charles I., and who regarded it only as a plausible rival to the form of Anglicanism which he wished to see universal. The plot for the Stuart Restoration, generally called after Atterbury's name, implicated the most prominent Papists of the day, such as Shippen in the House of Commons. Hence the need of the autumn session, wherein Walpole made his first appearance as Premier at St. Stephen's.

In 1723, returned from his exile abroad, the real Tory leader, Bolingbroke, no longer now the high-flying legitimist

which he had been, when, as St. John, he first confronted in the Lower House his old class-mate and rival of Eton days. The Patriot King had been banished to the region of Tory theory, together with the Church, whose priests he had always despised, and whose doctrines he had always derided, in which he had affected to see the mother of her people. Bolingbroke, still posing as a Tory liberator from Whig delusions, had at this point become the progenitor of the modern stock of Conservative opportunists. At this mellower stage of his political development he had made, on his return to England, overtures, but coldly received, to Walpole; four years later, he was at more particular pains to subvert his ancient competitor with George II.; Pulteney co-operated to the same end. Spencer Compton, a methodical, colourless member of Parliament, whose blamelessness and mediocrity have suggested a comparison to Spencer Perceval, had been first heard of as one of the managers of Sacheverell's impeachment; he had become Speaker in 1715; during the later years of George I. he had been among the courtiers of the Prince of Wales at Leicester House. It was, therefore, expected that the first act of George II. would be to send for his old personally respectable and politically incapable friend. "I should advise you," pleasantly remarked Walpole to his friend, Sir George Yonge, "not to commit yourself too much against us. We shall soon indeed go out, but then we shall soon come back." Pulteney now was not slow to find out that a Whig he had always been, and a Whig he would live and die; that statesman's presentation of Bolingbroke's popular version of Toryism had moved no applause at St. Stephen's and had touched no responsive chord in the country. At the council he summoned on his accession a speech had to be prepared for George II. Compton was constrained to confess his inability to prepare it. "Give me the pen," remarked Walpole, with contemptuous good nature; so, by an outside

hand, were prepared the official utterances from the new monarch. Mrs. Howard was the lady employed by George II. to plead his non-matrimonial suit to the beautiful Mary Bellenden; when that lady proved obdurate, the Sovereign consoled himself with the reflection that the mediatress was almost as pretty as, and a great deal less trouble than, the original object of his passion; to the influence of his lawful Queen, on behalf of Walpole, was now to be added that of his courtesy Consort. According to the law then in existence, Parliament was not to be dissolved till six months after the death of George I. When, on June 15th, 1727, the House met, the first business considered was the Civil List, on which Walpole had easily seen his way to outbidding the new King's old friend, Compton. A Civil List producing £130,000 a year, settled on the King for life, was Walpole's first proposal; it excited the severe but loyal criticism of the Opposition leader, Shippen. Compare, he said, with the present motion the pecuniary position of Queen Anne; out of her comparatively scanty revenue she paid £19,000 a year for the increment of poor Church of England livings, and, from the funds accruing to her under the head of Post Office, £5,000 a year for the Duke of Marlborough, and as much more for the building of Blenheim Palace; she did, indeed, once ask the House for £5,000; the request was never upon any scale repeated; the Royal expenses were promptly reduced to £450,000. The real cause of the Royal extravagance for which the honourable person (Shippen would not say his honourable friend) made himself responsible, was the foreign policy of George I., and the bottomless gulf of Walpole's secret service. Shippen always showed himself an improving speaker; this was quite his best effort; pointed with epigram, packed with skilfully marshalled facts and figures, his impeachment of the minister made him the idol of the Opposition; nothing came of it all but sound. Shippen could not even find a seconder.

All resistance collapsed; the ministerial motion was carried without even a division.

"I am heartily sick of all this. Late hours have shamefully grown of late, even to two of the clock. It has been one of the griefs and burdens of my life; it has innumerable inconveniences attending it." These words were extorted from Speaker Arthur Onslow by the growing length of the sittings during the Georgian era—culminating into debate of December 22nd, 1741, which, without his leaving the House in the modern fashion for a chop or a cup of tea, kept the chairman in his place for seventeen hours on the Westminster election. The hours at St. Stephen's since the Revolution, displacing the Stuarts in 1688, had been becoming longer and later. In 1675, Marvell told his constituents at Hull the Commons had been sitting throughout the whole of two consecutive days; hence, with his little leisure and the spun-out debates, ending in the smallest results, they could expect no news from him; two years later, he informed the same correspondents that he had been enforced in their service most strictly to keep Lent by sitting at St. Stephen's daily, without breaking his fast till 9 p.m. Under Anne, the House continued to meet nominally at about 8 a.m.; * under the earlier Stuarts, as during the Commonwealth, it was usual for members to adjourn in a body for their mid-day dinner; "we shall grow hungry and angry if we are kept till one," said General Disbrowe. The Cromwellian lawyers took the same view as the soldiers. It was an abomination to sit in the afternoon; "a grave and sober council," said Serjeant Wyld, "ought not to do things in the dark"; James I. had justified his erasure of the Commons' protest from their journals on the ground that it had been passed at six of the clock p.m., and by candle light—a thing, he said, unpre-

* On April 19th, 1642, the Long Parliament had ordered that all members absent at 8 a.m. should pay a fine of one shilling to the poor.

cedented. On May 31st, 1659, the House passed an order that no new motion should be made after 12 (noon); Hazelrig declared no good could ever come of candles; Sir William Widdrington, surreptitiously introducing two lights, was promptly sent to the Tower.

Till the last half of the seventeenth century evening sittings were almost unknown; nor even then, with the strong counter attractions of the theatre, the tavern, and the fashionable lounge of Pall Mall, was it always possible to secure a quorum. Meanwhile, however, the rule for the transaction of business at St. Stephen's during daylight, if formally unrepealed, was found to be practically inconvenient; it interfered with the attendance at the Law Courts of counsel, many of them being also M.Ps. not less than with the merchants, professional men, and State officials; these were daily growing more numerous in the House, and could not be disregarded; *minima contentos nocte Britannos;* under this motto, in the *Tatler*, Steele complains the Courts of Justice were scarce open in Westminster Hall at the hour when William Rufus sat down to dinner in it; so much further up into the day are planted our fathers' landmarks, that, if our clergy want full congregations, they must drop 10 a.m. as the canonical hour; if matters go on at this rate, the dinner hour, which has crept by degrees from twelve till three, may be fixed at a liberal nine. Bishop Burnet, whose experiences comprise a period between 1643 and 1715, declares the parliamentary reform most wanted to be fewer and shorter sessions; the House now seldom meets before noon; it then grows tired after two or three hours; let it revert to its earlier hours by the King's order; all necessary business can then be dispatched in a short session; so, too, will the time and morals of members both be spared. In Onslow's day, the evil excited concern at Court, and elicited from the Prince of Wales a protest to Onslow himself; Onslow needed no such appeal to

use his influence with the House to mend its ways; George III., by his night and morning habits, set the good example; he was enjoying his first sleep, when it gradually became the habit for his ministers first to take part in the debate; at the same time was established the innovation of long adjournments at Christmas and Easter, as well as every week over Saturday. The midwinter and spring recess, originally introduced for considerations of sport by Sir Robert Walpole, were at the time subject to much complaint; they soon became established and popular; the House showed itself more and more ready to lengthen its days by encroaching on its nights. But, in 1783, the fact of the division in the debate on the Address being postponed till half-past seven was considered noteworthy; in the same year, during the discussion on Fox's India Bill, the Speaker was not voted out of the chair till 4.30 a.m.; the Westminster scrutiny kept members at the House throughout the whole night till the bells chimed six o'clock. The younger Pitt delivered his great speech on the slave trade; the rising sun shot through the windows of the House while he was on his peroration; the orator, looking upwards, saw the bright rays that at once suggested the quotation and the metaphor with which he concluded: "Africa shall enjoy at length those blessings, so plentifully vouchsafed us in a much earlier period of the world—

> "Nos . . . primus equis Orieus afflavit anhelis;
> Illic sera rubeus accendit lumina vesper."

It was now no novelty for members, as they went home to bed, to see the workmen busy after their breakfast in Pall Mall. So matters went on till the Reform Bill of 1832; then the adjournment at midnight became a rule not often violated till later Victorian times.

In the House of Commons which met after the elections, January 23rd, 1727, the most remarkable and interesting

figure was that of its Speaker, whose name and opinions have been already mentioned. Onslow was called to the Chair while it was yet tainted by the memory and associations of unworthy predecessors like Trevor, who had experienced the last disgrace of pronouncing, in the manner already described, his own condemnation for gross misconduct. During the seventeenth century, Lenthall had at one point of his career dignified his position by asserting the independence of the Assembly. Whatever may be the estimate of Lenthall, it is not open to doubt that Onslow first raised the statutory office of the first Commoner of the realm to the impressive place occupied by it ever since. On his first election part of the Speaker's salary was paid by the Government. Onslow resented the possible suspicion which this source of payment might involve; he refused all payments which might seem to come from that quarter. The rest of his conduct was consistent; Colonel Fitzroy, afterwards Lord Southampton, then in attendance on the King as Groom of the Chamber, excused himself for coming in late to make a quorum by the plea of waiting on His Majesty. The dignified form of Onslow raised itself to its extreme height, and seemed to dilate with indignation, as the awe-inspiring voice said, "Sir, don't tell me of waiting; this is your place to attend in; this is your first duty." George III. was on the Throne when Onslow, a second time, showed the same high sense of respect due to the Chamber; the Black Rod had brought a message for the Commons to attend the Sovereign; but the two score members not being present the House was not constituted; Onslow would not obey the summons till the proper total had completed itself; the process kept the King waiting at least half an hour. Onslow's example at once influenced his successor, Norton; he, in April, 1777, in reply to a Royal request for the payment of debts, plainly told the Sovereign that, at a time of grievous national distress, the House had granted a

supply beyond the Royal wants; the last word, as offensive to the Sovereign, raised some debate and exposed the Speaker to criticism; Norton, defended by Charles James Fox, threatened to resign next day unless the House passed a vote approving his conduct. Another instance of Speaker Norton's independence occurred March 13th, 1780; Sir Edward Dering had censured as unconstitutional Rigby's remarks on the Royal revenue; the courtier M.P., thus criticised, appealed to the Speaker, who was at that moment in the gallery; in a moment Norton came down, and in a set speech denounced the growing influence of the Crown.

Arthur Onslow, by birth (1691) an excise commissioner's son, by training a barrister, had been for seven years a member of the House when, in 1727, he became its chairman; qualities, more popularly engaging than the judicial impartiality and quickness of perception, which made him a synonym for excellence as a speaker, gave him, among all classes, a social and personal reputation that was unique. Witty, genial, a shrewd student of life and character in all their aspects, he considered nothing that was human below his dignity or foreign to his business. Onslow it was, who, in reply to the question, what would happen if the oft-repeated threat of "naming" a member were fulfilled, first said the repeatedly quoted words: "The Lord in Heaven only knows"; this was during a sitting, which had been enlivened by a member, in a state of after-dinner hilarity, requesting Mr. Speaker Onslow to "give us a song"; the Bacchanalian, on Onslow's order, found himself promptly the prisoner of the Serjeant-at-Arms, to be released only upon paying a substantial fine; the "naming" terror is prescribed by an order of the House (January 2nd, 1693), that the person so indicated shall incur its extreme displeasure. Close to St. Stephen's, in the Georgian era, used to stand a public-house, called the "Jew's Harp"; hither, incognito, Onslow

used to come on off nights to talk and joke with the regular frequenters of the place. Onslow's election to the Chair was chiefly due to Walpole, who had looked to find in him the passive instrument of his parliamentary purpose; the Speaker, however, soon showed himself as independent of his political friends as he was unawed by their opponents; the House liked him all the better because of the essential humanity which the official robes could not quite conceal.

The attempt to bribe the constituencies signally miscarried in 1874, when Mr. Gladstone's promise to abolish the income-tax left him in a minority. Sir Robert Walpole's idea of corrupting the House of Commons proved scarcely less unsuccessful; to Walpole's Administration was largely due the increase of national prosperity between 1715 and 1730; with a view of conciliating the Tories to the House of Hanover, the minister reduced the land-tax by half, while his sinking fund reduced the national debt by £1,200,000 a year; at the same time, the total abolition of the land-tax was promised later. From that moment began to totter the fabric of the minister's ascendancy; unwarned by earlier indications, Walpole persevered with his scheme for transferring the tobacco and wine taxes from the customs to the excise—in other words, the substitution of a tax at the manufactory on the quantity made, for an impost, levied at the port. The plan was no sooner announced than Pulteney and his writers in the *Craftsman* reinforced the Opposition in the House by the denunciation of the Press; it was a device of "Satan" Walpole for repeating the despotism of the Long Parliament, in which, indeed, Pym and his friends had first taxed beer, cider, and perry; a standing army of revenue officers would trample Magna Charta under foot, undermine Parliament, and reduce free-born Britons to the level of Continental helots. "No slavery! no excise!" was the response returned by the whole country to these appeals. In the House itself, the first divi-

sion in the Excise debate gave Walpole a majority of sixty-one (266 to 205); these figures steadily sank to less than a score. Walpole's short, square figure, and coarse, shrewd, good-natured face, were no more moved by the storm than Westminster Abbey itself; he would resign, he would do anything to serve the King and to tranquillize the country; but now Crown and Court were both on his side; the Scotch and Walpole heartily hated each other; Lord Stair tried to do him an ill turn with the Queen; he maladroitly spoke of his conscience. "O! my lord," replied the lady, "don't mention that; you will make me faint"; clever Queen Caroline could only laugh at the patriots and tell them that their models—Bolingbroke and Cartaret—had been long known by her for worthless men of parts as any in England, and the two greatest liars and knaves in all Europe.

George II., the last English King who ever wielded the sword in battle, was to show a stout heart on the field of Dettingen. His courage in his treatment of Walpole did not fail him now. Hervey told the King of the set made against his minister in the Commons. "He is a brave fellow," cried George, with a big oath, as the tears ran down his face, "and I shall stand by him." As for the minister himself, the same night that he knew his Excise Bill to have cost him his majority, he had an impromptu supper party at his house, was never in better spirits; he only referred to the political incident in the words, "This cock will fight no more"; the next day he let it be known he would drop the measure; in the excitement of the popular mind, he saw it could only be enforced by violence; if the King wished the Bill to be continued, he must find another minister for the work. Abuse and attack, however, had no more effect upon Walpole than so many blows upon a sand-bag; his opponents, indeed, in the Lower House, were satisfied with villifying him; they did not wish to see him out. Walpole, therefore, went on much as if

nothing had happened; his majority improved a little; on the Place Bill, in the session of 1734, he defeated by thirty-nine a Tory amendment, aimed at its destruction; he easily justified his dismissal of the Duke of Bolton and of Lord Cobham from the Army. The Whig malcontents and the ultra-Tories, who made up the hostile force, were as jealous collectively of each other as individually were their leaders.

During these debates, Henry Pelham first gave clear promise of the part he was soon to play; the whole business was, he said rather scornfully of the Septennial Bill repeal debate, a gladiatorial show. Walpole had never undervalued Pulteney or any other of his opponents; he now saw them formidably reinforced by a City merchant, who, on the other side, was valued for qualities, not unlike those which had won Walpole the confidence of the nation. This was Sir John Barnard, by no means a wealthy man, but of incorruptible integrity, of unfailing practical good sense, an expert in all business matters, and a financier, at least equal to Walpole himself. Beginning as an independent member, concerned only for his fellow citizens, who had paid all his election expenses, Barnard had gradually become the leader of the most influential section of Walpole's enemies.

A notable feature in these discussions is that, though reports of the debates still appeared surreptitiously, the chief speakers on both sides, and especially those, whose one weapon was Walpole's malignant and corrupting motive in all he supported or resisted, addressed themselves more to the country than to the House of Commons. Of all those who declared for the Septennial Bill repeal, Sir John Barnard alone could not be charged with inconsistency; he had not been in Parliament when the Septennial Act was passed in 1717; he was, therefore, entitled to his place in the minority of one hundred and eighty four in 1734, which confronted the ministerial phalanx of two hundred and sixty-seven strong.

In the elections which followed, the first prospects favoured the Whigs. Both sides strained every nerve for victory. Walpole himself, out of his own pocket, spent £60,000; yet in his own county of Norfolk, he could not prevent the defeat of Coke and Morden. Yet, in some parts, particularly in the counties of Essex, Sussex, and Yorkshire, the Whig strength underwent no appreciable reduction. The Opposition gain showed itself not only in the numerical improvement, but in the fact that the disputed elections, which were then referred to committees of the House, were largely decided against the Government. When the House met, the Tory Opposition had mounted to two hundred and fifty, which, as Chesterfield shrewdly said, was sure soon to become a majority.

Philip Dormer Stanhope, to call him by his House of Commons' name, possessed in a political experience, personal or hereditary, more varied than many could boast, at least one qualification for parliamentary prophecy. Born in 1694, in the house of his grandmother, Lady Halifax, he had seen not only Montagu, but Danby himself, as well as all the leading statesmen of the Revolution. He had heard Richard Cromwell himself, as an old man, give evidence in a law court before Chief Justice Holt;* all the men in the front rank of public life at that time, had been his associates or opponents—Bolingbroke, Carteret, Pulteney, Walpole, Pitt; these experiences covered the period during which the modern House of Commons' system established itself. The shrewdness of his political forecasts was shown in his prediction of the French Revolution (foreseen also, if not quite so definitely, by Arthur Young—1741-1820, and by Sir Nathaniel Wraxall—1751-1831) and of the extinction of the Polish monarchy, not less than of the Pope's temporal power. As to the vicissitudes of factions, Chesterfield had seen the Whig House of

* *Miscellaneous Works of Lord Chesterfield and Memoirs of His Life*, by M. Maty, M.D., I., p. 9.

Commons of William III. followed by the triumphant Toryism under Anne;—that, in its turn, succeeded by the re-establishment of Whigs in 1705, by their effacement five years later, and by the new political order, introduced with the Tory supremacy of George III. Educated at Trinity Hall, Cambridge—later to be the college of Henry Sumner Mayne, of Henry Fawcett, and of Charles Dilke—Stanhope entered St. Stephen's as member for St. Germains; like Charles Fox afterwards, Stanhope delivered his maiden speech while yet a minor; to escape a certain fine of £500 and possible imprisonment as well, he went into temporary retirement, returning to politics only when he had come into his title, to resist Walpole's excise scheme. On the same bench as Stanhope, traditionally allotted to independent members, often sat, during the second George's reign, his rival wit and friend, the good-natured, indolent George Selwyn, of whose contributions to the oratory of the place is extant only one specimen; some one in the House had laughingly mentioned the rumour of Sir Joshua Reynolds' standing for Parliament. "It is no smiling matter," says Selwyn, "for Sir Joshua is the ablest man I know on the canvas."

At this time, Walpole owed such ascendancy as he still had in the House of Commons to the Tory vote. The dissenters, hitherto his warmest supporters, weary of his repeated promises to secure them relief in the matter of tests, were no longer satisfied with his annual Bill, indemnifying those who had violated the Test Act by holding office; by way of compensation for this neglect of the nonconformists, Walpole so far took up the cause of the Quakers as to propose that the Church dues, which they conscientiously refused, should, in future, be levied by summary process before two magistrates, instead of by prosecution in the Chancery and ecclesiastical courts with imprisonments and vindictive suits. The whole clerical interest now organised itself against the minister.

Walpole could not understand for the life of him why the parsons should worry without any object, and superseded Archbishop Gibson by Potter in the primacy; as a fact, he underrated the forces now ranged against him; Sir John Barnard's new colleague in the Opposition managership was Lord Polworth, the heir to the Marchmont earldom, a man who knew the House of Commons nearly as well as Walpole himself, who combined with a sustained and intense application to work, a restless and resourceful resolve to succeed. Walpole, on the other hand, found his chief supporter at St. Stephen's in Henry Pelham, a loyal rather than capable friend in Wilmington, and in Sir William Yonge, a man of ready wit but without a shred of character. Wearied by the now unequal contest, the minister awaited only a plausible opportunity for resignation. It came at the end of January, 1742; in those days a disputed election return gave to the Opposition the same opportunity against the Government, as is now provided by a no-confidence vote. The enquiry into the Chippenham election resulted in one of those majorities of one against ministers, which have sufficed to decide the fate of more than one strong Government; by that figure, on March 21st, 1831, the House accepted the Grey Reform Bill (302 to 301).

In the case of Walpole, by 237 against 236, the House maintained the election of the Tory candidate, Sir Edward Baynton; Walpole accepted defeat with the same easy good nature that he had before shown in yielding to Shippen's intercession for the lives of those who would have assassinated the minister; while the tellers were advancing to the Speaker's table, he beckoned Baynton to cross over to the other side of the House to sit at his side. Thus did the fallen statesman set an example of nonchalance in discomfiture, faithfully followed by nearly all who, sitting in his place, have shared his fate.

# CHAPTER XI.

## FROM PITT TO WILKES.

The Pelham Administration—Pelham's devotion to Walpole—His attempts at reform—William Pitt the elder, Murray and Fox, his opponents—Pitt's style of oratory—His influence on the country—A defender of liberty—Growth of the Empire under Pitt—Pitt's power over the House—His most successful speeches—The composition of the House—Pitt's rise to power—Sir Francis Dashwood—Charles Townshend—Charles Jenkinson—Richard Rigby—The "King's friends"—Lord North—His coolness—His likeness to George III.—His physical disadvantages—His powers of debate—His imperturbability of temper—Fall of North—Alderman Sawbridge—George Byng—John Wilkes—His friendship with Churchill—Sir Richard Hill—Wilkes recalled from exile and returned for Middlesex—Expelled from the House—Elected first Sheriff and afterwards Mayor of London—Allowed to sit in the House in 1782—His last years.

SIR SPENCER COMPTON, formerly Speaker, and a leading member of the Opposition, practically led by the then Prince of Wales, had been "sent for" by George II. on his accession, and had been taught by Walpole to draft the first speech of the new King to his council. Walpole was recalled. Compton relapsed into obscurity, with the title of Lord Wilmington. Walpole's fall, which drew tears from the King, was for a moment to be the second opportunity of the politician who had been George's first choice. Wilmington continued as colourless under his new style as he had shown himself while yet a Commoner. The first stable Administration after Walpole's was that in which Henry Pelham, from having as paymaster led the House of Commons for Wilming-

ton, himself, in 1744, became First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Pelham, sensible and conscientious, derived his political ideas from Walpole, whose apt disciple he had always shown himself, as well as that minister's faithful and courageous friend, both in the House and out of it. During the Excise debates of March, 1733, after having spoken for his chief in the final debate, Pelham supported Walpole on his arm out of the lobby to Alice's coffee-house hard by; as they were entering, two men set upon Walpole and nearly strangled him; Pelham pushed his friend from the steps into the passage; drawing his sword, he confronted the assailants with, "Now, gentlemen, who will be the first to fall?"

His loyalty to his old chief, Walpole, invests Pelham, as a House of Commons figure, with its chief interest. Neither the House nor the country seemed to admit of management without the appeals to cupidity and agencies of corruption employed by Walpole. These were, therefore, continued by Pelham, who, in other respects, showed some disposition to legislative reform. As Premier, he showed some skill in manipulating the factions, which had now replaced parties at St. Stephen's in such a way as to obtain a majority for his proposals to abolish the scandal of the Fleet marriages, and to enact that the marriage rite, to be legal, must be preceded by three publications of the banns in church, or by the purchase of a marriage license. The confusion of intrigues and counter-intrigues between the aristocratic factions of the time resulted, first, in the Broad-bottomed Administration of the Pelhams; secondly, in the Newcastle Cabinet. But the interest of the Lower House, as, indeed, of the country, is centred exclusively in William Pitt.

Among the most formidable of Pitt's rivals were Henry Fox and Murray, afterwards Lord Mansfield; Murray, with an oratorical gift, not much beneath that of Pitt, with greater

skill as a debater, combined a practical knowledge of human nature in and out of the House of Commons such as Pitt never possessed and might have despised; like Bolingbroke and Walpole before them, Henry Fox and William Pitt had been competitors at Eton; unlike these predecessors, they were to hand down those traditions of antagonism to their representatives in the next generation. To Pitt, no toil or responsibility seemed too severe if it secured the prize of patriotic power; Fox would have missed no opportunity, and have adapted himself to any alliance, provided his love of ease could be gratified, and the foundations of his family wealth secured; notwithstanding some natural hesitation of speech, Henry Fox, as a ready and concise debater, had given valuable aid to Walpole, whose political ideas, as well as whose shrewd and selfish cupidity he reproduced.

The oratory of the House of Commons had first become a national power in the Long Parliament; it suffered, indeed, from the legal and theological pedantry of the time as it had been previously tainted by the verbal extravagance, and the excessive fondness for subtle conceits of thought and language, which came into fashion under the Tudors. These faults had disappeared with the Stuarts; Somers, however, and his contemporaries had clearness and cleverness, precision of thought, and businesslike lucidity of statement, rather than the qualities constituting oratory. Pitt, on the other hand, is universally admitted to have been the greatest oratorical force of his time; he lacked the mastery of methodic statement, and the swift adaptability to the requirements of debate, which were conspicuous in his son. That Chatham, in his prime, was a matchless declaimer, seems established by all available testimony beyond dispute; Chateaubriand, when an exile in England, during the French Revolution, had listened to the debates at St. Stephen's while the tradition of Chatham's eloquence was yet fresh—while Chatham's son and

Charles James Fox were at the height of their fame. The French critic, returned to London as Ambassador, to find Canning and Grey the leading representatives of contemporary eloquence, writes of the progressive decline in parliamentary speaking, in the tone of one who had reason to regard oratory as having reached its climax of excellence in the elder Pitt, as not absolutely maintained in the younger, and as entering upon its decadence with his successors. The first Pitt's enthusiasm and passion caused his contemporaries at Westminster, and in the country, to see in him exactly the moral and oratorical antithesis of his age. The small bird-like face, with the eagle beak and flashing eye; the voice of unique flexibility and power, set off by perfect elocution, and a gesture so artistic and graceful as to cause the speaker to be called the Garrick of orators. These are the personal characteristics which were as universally associated with the great Commoner as the crown and sceptre with the monarch himself. Murray, on the other hand, who so often and brilliantly confronted Pitt at St. Stephen's, admirable for good taste, argumentative skill, sustained excellence of diction, never extended his influence beyond the parliamentary precinct. To-day the newspaper reports may enable even a speaker, whom the House does not warmly welcome, to secure a powerful audience outside. At the time now mentioned, a reputation was made or marred by the effect immediately produced on those who heard the tones, and who gazed upon the action of the speaker; it was with reference to Pitt's oratorical ascendancy in the country, not less than in Parliament, that his opponent, Henry Pelham, called him "greater than any of us." Walpole might affect to sneer at him as a student of theatrical effects; Pitt, indeed, transacted his private business and prepared his speeches in full Court dress. Of these things the nation knew and cared nothing. His countrymen saw in him the one statesman, the watch-

word of whose home policy was efficiency in every department, who alone among English statesmen, since the days of Cromwell, chose his generals and officials, not because of their family connections, but because he believed them to be the most useful servants the country could have. "England," said Frederick of Prussia, "has been in travail a long time; at last she has brought forth a man." All party distinctions were over-ridden by Pitt; the fearless champion and truthful interpreter of the classes and interests, as yet unrepresented in Parliament, he led the House of Commons, not by gratifying its collective or individual self-love, but by over-awing, even bullying it, according to his humour. A Whig by his earliest associations and professions, with a bitterness and success, for which he afterwards felt some compunctions, he had led the attack upon Walpole; he had afterwards taken office under Pelham, and had coalesced with Newcastle; his superiority to place and to its emoluments had been shown by his scornful rejection of the Paymaster's perquisites; the genuineness of his Liberalism was attested by his defence of a subject's liberty against arbitrary imprisonment, of the constituencies in the case of Wilkes against the House of Commons, of the constitutional rights of the American settlers against England, by the preservation of Prussia, by his advocacy of enlightened government for India under the Crown, by his recognition of the comprehensiveness of the Church of England with its Calvinistic creed and Arminian clergy, as well as by his first suggestions of parliamentary reform; the most signal and enduring proof of his influence at St. Stephen's was shown in the close association from his time onward of the representative Chamber with the growth of the British Empire. Nor but for the Administration of Chatham would the genius of Burke have been able to invest the Assembly of shire knights and town burgesses with the imperial grandeur which elevated it from the local legislature of England and Scotland

into the Senate of the mighty Empire, with an authority extended by virtue and fortune to the furthest limits of the east and west. An Assembly this, which controlled all inferior legislatures without annihilating any. Thus, before Chatham passed away, while Burke was in the midst of his imperial enterprise, English trade with America had become only less by half a million than it had been with the whole world in 1700. During that period the total of English trade had risen from £500,000 to £6,000,000, and our purely colonial trade from being a twelfth part of English commerce had become a third.

In facts and figures like these may be found the secret of this statesman's unparalleled ascendancy over the Court, the country, and the House of Commons. Apart from that moral predominance, and the administrative genius accompanying it, Pitt would not have controlled the Assembly by the power of his tongue. Only the force of his genius and the material results of his rule secured the toleration and the success of parliamentary qualities, which might have been shared in common with a mountebank; foreign ministers trembled before his superb insolence, and could not collect their scattered senses in his presence. The Commons lived in terror of the mighty Commoner, who was less their leader than their despot, treating them each and all with an arrogance and scorn scarcely reached by Cromwell, when he sent the whole Assembly packing; the disdainful question, "Mr. Speaker, who will laugh at sugar now?" has its place in an anecdote too familiar to bear repetition here. Somewhat less hackneyed is another characteristic incident. Morton, chief justice of Chester, mimicking, as he said, Pitt's order of precedence, had said, "Commons, Lords, and King"; the great man, slowly rising, moved that the words should be taken down; the quailing clerks obeyed the order; the wretched Morton, in an agony of terror, could only say, "Indeed, Mr.

Speaker, sir, I meant nothing." Pitt was pleased to declare the matter at an end. "The moment a man confesses his error he ceases to be guilty. I have a great regard for the member, but the next time that member means nothing I advise him to say nothing." Magnificent in declamation as he could be, Pitt's most successful speeches in the House were short, almost extemporaneous, and delivered in an easy conversational style; he would encourage an opponent, whom he had just withered with contempt, by the colloquial salute, as he rose, "And now let us hear what the gentleman has to say." Grattan, no mean judge, considered Pitt's nearly improvised and comparatively brief deliverances on the early part of the American War, on the King's Speech in 1770, and on the privileges of Parliament as his best, or, at least, equalled only perhaps by his tribute to Walpole, and his confession of error in having opposed the Excise Bill. Of the phrases coined by Chatham, fewer perhaps than in the case of any other speaker so great, have passed into the common currency of political talk; in 1762, Grenville's fretful query, where a tax could have been better placed than it had been laid by Dashwood, at once drew from Pitt the whining and satirical aside of a well-known song's refrain, "Gentle shepherd, tell me where."

The composition of the Assembly during these years explains its passive acquiescence in the imperious airs of its tyrannical manager, and also shows how, in his scheme of drawing closer the fiscal and administrative ties between England and her dependencies, George III. was able, with impunity, to set it at nought. Sunderland's earlier constitutional arrangements, which selected ministers from the dominant majority, were systematically disregarded. The House, thus reduced to impotence, lost its own self-respect; it thus became as unpopular as it had been in 1701, when the Kentish petitioners desired it to turn their loyal addresses into

bills of supply, and when the "Legion Memorial," the product, as is supposed, of Daniel Defoe's pen, focussed, reflected, and intensified the people's distrust of their representatives. The old Whigs ignored the representative side of the House of Commons; they resisted the reforms demanded by shiftings of the population, which would have made the Assembly a mirror of the people. The changes adopted by the Long Parliament and by Cromwell had been cancelled at the Restoration. From Charles II. to George III. nothing had been done to rectify parliamentary abuses. Thus, in 1760, Manchester or Birmingham were wholly without members, and were thus politically less important than the non-existent boroughs of Old Sarum and Bramber. Under George III. the Royal boroughs possessed the same representative value as under Elizabeth. The Duke of Newcastle at one time returned a third of the entire House; the counties and a few great provincial centres were alone really represented; the great expense of contesting shires left them in the hands of the great local families. The suffrage was so limited that in all England, out of a population of eight millions, one hundred and sixty thousand alone were electors. Yet Burke had said the value, spirit, and essence of the House of Commons consists in its being the express image of the nation's feelings. The House, however, had now become an alien institution, so aloof from the national life and thought that, at the height of his popularity, Pitt, with difficulty, found a seat for himself. Purchase, to which he would not stoop, formed practically the sole avenue to St. Stephen's; had been established for the purpose an open market, in which constituencies were bought at a price, rising from £100 to £4,000; the popular Chamber had, in fact, become representative of little more than of boroughs, having only a nominal existence, of towns, ruined or exterminated, of opulent individuals, and of foreign potentates; the East Indian interest

had asserted itself in succession to the West Indian; the nabob, who had successfully shaken the padoga tree, was an imposing and characteristic figure in St. Stephen's Chapel; he found himself in the company of men of fashion, who were beginning to find the place a good sort of club, and of needy adventurers, who hoped that somehow it might help them to retrieve their broken fortunes.

The national reaction, however, had begun, before Chatham's time, under Queen Anne. Religious influences conspired with literary to rekindle and to diffuse the fire of patriotic dignity, or at least self-respect. The taste for Shakespeare, created by Addison's essays in the *Spectator*, formed the first influence in this direction; four editions of the national poet, rising to thirty thousand each, preceded by the appeal of the Wesleys to all that was best in the English temper, had been heralded by the elevating popularity of the dramatist and poet. Pitt's rise against the opposition of Crown, Court, and the aristocratic cabals, testified the new political energy born in the people, and constituted the best presage of parliamentary reform. George III. unwittingly prepared the way to ascendancy for Pitt, whom he disliked, by breaking up the Whigs, then predominant in the Commons. Overshadowed by the Royal favourite, Lord Bute, Pitt refused to be responsible for measures he did not guide. Hence, his resignation in 1761, and that quarrel with him of the Whigs, which proved their own death-blow; for the immediate sequel was Bute's rise and the triumph of the King's prerogative. Bute's perfectly intelligible and consistent object was to treat the House of Commons as the first Roman Emperors treated the Republic—to preserve all constitutional forms, while making the Chamber an organ of the Royal will. In this way was repeated more perfectly the demonstration, already made under the Tudors, that the machinery of a free, and the ends of an arbitrary, Government need not be incompatible.

Meanwhile, was opened a Treasury department for buying M.Ps. wholesale, sometimes at the cost of £2,500 a day. Bute's Peace of Paris was concluded; the House of Commons might have suspended its sittings altogether, but that the war debts and need of supplies rendered its sittings indispensable.

During the ministries, presided over by Bute, the chief personages of the Commons were Sir Francis Dashwood, George Grenville, and Charles Townshend; Grenville will presently re-appear as Prime Minister; Dashwood had been made Chancellor of the Exchequer by Bute, because, as was said, of his quickness in casting up tavern scores. The boon companion of Wilkes, with whom, in the whole race of profligacy, he ran a dead heat, he founded and named the mock order of Franciscans, who held their revels at Medmenham Abbey on the Thames; the high priest of the order, Dashwood himself, in the holy habit of a monk, with Wilkes as his colleague, led the blasphemous orgies; Dashwood, drawn to the life in Churchill's poem, *The Candidate*, was a little too bad even for that libertine satirist, though not for the respectable Scotch favourite of the undoubtedly good and religious King; Townshend (1725-67), the grandson of Walpole's Townshend, was called by the sedate Burke, the ornament and delight of the House; when, in 1766, the Duke of Grafton's ministry was being formed, Pitt, its presiding spirit, told Townshend he was of too great a magnitude not to fill a responsible place, and pressed upon him for a second time the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. It was then that Townshend made (May 12th, 1767) the wonderful speech mentioned by Horace Walpole, generally known as the "Champagne Speech"; it had no opportuneness; it covered every conceivable subject and person, including all ministers, past, future, present, and especially himself. Sparkling with the brilliancy of wine, its discursiveness, folly, and satire betrayed its inspiration in every sentence; the speaker kept his

audience in rapture and roars of laughter, surpassing Chatham in language, Burke in metaphors, Rigby in impudence, himself in folly, and everybody in good humour; when he sat down, after an hour's display of wit, lies, vanity, and delightful diction, he had increased his reputation, already great, and proved his incapacity for serious statesmanship.

Never possessed of a seat in the representative Chamber, Bute had in it a very effective agent in his secretary, Charles Jenkinson, never indeed in the Cabinet, but some time responsible for the War Office, and the father of the future Premier, Lord Liverpool, who, in length of his office tenure, was to surpass all predecessors, the younger Pitt alone excepted; Charles II. had dignified the family by a baronetcy; but Jenkinson is one of the very few instances, afforded by the Lower House, of a man, who, not making his mark till middle age, with slenderest resources of his own, made a great career for himself and his descendants. In person, as well as in other respects, his lank limbs, ungraceful figure and gesture, formed a striking contrast to the great master of the Assembly, Pitt; so successful were his tongue and the expression of his face in concealing his thoughts, that he had come to be known as the dark lantern. The comparison seemed the more life-like because of the twinkling motion of his eyelids, generally half-closed, opened and shut alternately more than once during every sentence he spoke; at the same time, whether in the House of Commons or in private society, while he spoke, his head was in so perpetual a state of movement, as to describe an incessant series of circles; his manner, perfectly natural, but always reserved and grave, possessed a special charm for many people of all ranks, and notwithstanding the leanness, and, as she said, the downright ugliness of Jenkinson's person, made Mrs. Piozzi call him the

knew; with the exception of Burke,

have been the most widely educated

and best informed man of his time. Unlike Burke, the world and human character to him were ever as open as they were thoroughly read books; his speeches in the House were rare, were never more than brief business statements, unlightened by wit, humour, or any quality which could withdraw attention from their immediate subject; all was cautious, clear, unpretentious, and deliberate; during his Secretaryship at War, his hearers said his utterances reminded them of a man crossing a torrent on stones so carefully as never once to wet his shoes.

Jenkinson's colleague, the Paymaster of the Forces, bore a name, which, to those who hear it to-day, may first suggest Disraeli's caricature in *Coningsby* of John Wilson Croker, to whom are attributed by the novelist the exaggerated self-esteem, characteristic of the historical Rigby.* Rigby's office as Paymaster made him free of ministerial control; he always voted for the Government; he never sat on their benches, nor ceased to condemn the American War. Hence when, March 8th, 1782, he declared Lord North ought to resign, but would not vote against him, Sheridan declared Rigby had a dual personality; as an individual, he always detested the American War; unfortunately he could never persuade the Paymaster to oppose it. An assiduous courtier in the levées at St. James's, Rigby managed to get nearer the Throne than many of those who had precedence of him; at St. Stephen's he always appeared in full Court dress of the same purple velvet, wherein Francis Bacon had astonished the House of Elizabeth and the first James. Hence, in the Bedford letter of "Junius," the congratulations of the Duke on his protection of blushing merit, represented by the purple glow, suffusing the self-assurance of the Paymaster; Rigby habitually served as the foil to Sheridan's wit first directed against him when posing of his freedom as a private member, he sat with the

* The Right Hon. Richard Rigby, born 1722, dying in 1788, had begun life as secretary to the Duke of Bedford when Irish Viceroy.

Opposition,* but always spoke for the Government; he had offended those around him in this station by sneering at the petitions against the war; Rigby had just bestowed extravagant praise upon a ministerial utterance; Sheridan immediately commented that if those speeches were the best which gave most offence Rigby was the Demosthenes of the House.

Ministers of the system wherein Jenkinson and Rigby figured prominently, had indeed ceased to be the public servants of the State, had become the private domestics of the Sovereign; if Jenkinson inspired the movements and actions of the King's friends,† Rigby it was who visibly directed them. The two Secretaries of the Treasury, Sir Grey Cooper and John Robinson, had denied having recommended anyone for a share in a recently negotiated State loan; Harrison accepted the statement, but hinted that its truth implied ingratitude on the part of the King's servants to the King's friends. During the Victorian era, the choice spirits of the House were made free of "Gossett's room" (the popular Serjeant-at-Arms), where they found good fellowship after a late sitting. Under George III., the House of Commons' pay office, where M.Ps were bought and sold, formed the convivial headquarters for the organization of the members, drilled by Jenkinson and Rigby to be henchmen of Lord North; this convenient coterie was nearly coeval with the American War, which it had been raised to promote, and whose conclusion gave the signal for disbandment.

Countless well-worn anecdotes, social and political, personal and parliamentary, have closely familiarised every reader with

* Similarly, in 1886, Mr. Chamberlain left the Liberal Government, but continued to sit on the Liberal side, provoking an observation from Mr. Gladstone *apropos* of those who still intermingled themselves with us.

† They were first directly called by this title in the House of Commons, March 15th, 1782, by Harrison, member for Grimsby.

George III.'s favourite statesman; his coolness and courage during the Gordon no-Popery riots of 1780, made, as such qualities seldom fail to do, a popular hero of an unpopular minister; the mob had assembled outside the official residence in Downing Street; every moment the rioters threatened to break through the front door; an assiduous private secretary armed himself with a big blunderbuss, and stood sentinel outside his chief's room. "What frightens me," said North, with his usual smile, "is not the rioters, but Jack Spencer's gun." During the spring of this tumultuous year, North was conducting his sixth session in the House against tremendous odds—growing disapproval out of doors, at St. Stephen's an Opposition daily more formidable under leaders presently to be mentioned.

The most noticeable feature in Lord North's appearance was his close likeness to George III. himself—a similarity, that, of course, suggested to his opponents more or less scandalous explanations; like the King, the minister in later years lost his eyesight; then it was that North, led about by an attendant at Tunbridge Wells, met the bitterest of his old adversaries, Barré, in a similar plight. "We have exchanged," said North, "hard blows in the House; but there are no two men in England who would be better pleased to see each other to-day." Long before it failed him entirely, North's vision had been weak; at the height of his power, his chief difficulty in leading the House came from his confusion of faces; once, during a Court dress debate, he inadvertently not only took off the wig of Welbore Ellis, but had almost left the House with it before discovering his mistake. Other physical disadvantages were not wanting. Something in the formation of his tongue interfered with his articulation, and caused him to bedew his nearest neighbour as well as himself in moments of excitement; of his somnolency, an idea can only be formed by those who, in addition to recalling the

habitual drowsiness of Mr. Gladstone's successor at St. Stephen's after 1874, can remember Mr. Hare's impersonation of Lord Ptarmigan in Robertson's play *Society*. Only a false quantity could sometimes awake the Etonian in the sleeper. The hoarse fulmination of Barré, the pathetic appeals of Burke had failed to disturb him when some member said "*vectĭgal*"; "*Vectīgal*," exclaimed North; having corrected the mistake, he recomposed himself to slumber at once.* The same habit placed him in more than one awkward predicament in private life; calling in Court dress, and wearing his Order of the Thistle, upon a lady, he fell asleep while awaiting her in her boudoir; a maidservant, finding a fat man with a blue ribbon napping in her ladyship's private room, went down-stairs and brought back the hall-porter to bundle out the intruder. At St. Stephen's, however, as elsewhere, he dozed with one, or rather two, ears open; occasionally Sir Grey Cooper, the Treasury official, who generally sat on his left hand, supplied a little blank in his chief's memory from his notes. But for the most part, North, when answering an opponent, or summing up a debate, was found to have missed no point, no fact nor figure of any importance; the happiest retort, which wit and humour could furnish, never failed him, when he did not care to use solid argument; of this, the best proof will be found in the official record of the debate at the end of 1780, upon Sir Hugh Palliser's Governorship of Greenwich Hospital. This inexhaustibility of reply and imperturbability of temper were what chiefly angered Charles Fox, when North's opponent, and George Selwyn's nephew, who, admitting North's statements to be true, denounced the "sportive elasticity" of his style, first during the riots of 1780, when the

* The same false quantity, at another time, was made in the House of Lords, when, as Mr. Abraham Hayward says, the bishops, remembering Dr. Keate, simultaneously raised their arms in imaginary application of the birch.

London suburbs were in a blaze, secondly, two years later, on the eve of his resignation, when he kept the House in roars by his remarks on a tax he thought of imposing on hair-dressers. No finer nor readier debater ever spoke in the Victorian House of Commons than Mr. Gathorne Hardy, afterwards Lord Cranbrook; during the Public Worship debate in the summer of 1874, the sudden appearance of a mouse crossing the floor suggested to the speaker the apparition of a cat at a like crisis of debate at the Synod of Dort. North had shown a like readiness upon a similar occasion; a dog, which had crept in unperceived, began to bark. "Mr. Speaker," expostulated North, "I am interrupted by a new member"; the animal expelled, audibly reappeared. "Spoke once," remarked North, and went on with his business. Only once is it on record that North lost his temper. Barré, in an exceptionally abusive harangue, had called him "the scourge of the country"; stung by his assailant's manner, which had disturbed him in his usual nap, he protested against "brutal and insolent words"; after a three hours' tumult he consented to apologise to the Speaker, and the incident ended. North's fall was in keeping with his whole career. For some days, in the winter of 1782, it had rained motions of censure in the House; Lord Surrey was proposing a new resolution to the same effect; one or two members rose together; Fox proposed that "Surrey should be heard"; North smilingly went up to Fox and whispered something in his ear: "Charles, I am going to tell the House something, which renders this motion unnecessary"; the next minister made his statement that his resignation had been accepted that morning by the King. A long debate had of course been expected; members generally had sent their carriages back to their stables. Not so North, whose coachman awaited him in Palace Yard, when, amid a snowstorm, he strolled out with other members, who were carriageless,

he at once beckoned some of his friends into his own conveyance, bowed to his opponents as he entered, with the words, "Good night, gentlemen, it is the first time I have known the advantage of being in the secret"; Adam, who dined with North that night, and who tells the story, said he had never seen him calmer and happier throughout the evening. The abiding interest which resides in this remarkable man comes from the fact that he set the fashion for ministerial demeanour at St. Stephen's, which, in proportion as they have been able to reproduce it, has made leaders of parties successful managers of the House. In proof of this, it is enough to mention the line of succession from North to Melbourne (William Lamb); from Melbourne to Palmerston, and in his mellower epoch to Disraeli.

The Radical irregulars, rather than the recognised Opposition chiefs, were those whose attacks had most effect upon North; naturally refined, and not only well-bred, he was strangely sensitive to the mere abuse of Alderman Sawbridge, to the less vulgar and dull, but by no means brilliant or polished invective of George Byng and the very ordinary vituperation of Wilkes. It was not enough for him to have defeated the combined attempt of Whigs and Radicals to exclude from the House the Court spokesmen and tools who had secured Government contracts; he showed himself deeply wounded by Sawbridge's direct affront to his personal honour. This City alderman, who was also its member, and at one time Lord Mayor, was the first to make an electoral reform a "parliamentary annual"; when he dropped his motion for the repeal of the Septennial Act, he let no session pass without a resolution for annual Parliaments. George Byng, member for Middlesex, was reputed the most disinterested and spotless son that Kent had given to the House of Commons since the younger Vane; his only fault seems to have been a tendency to parade his principles. The

mischievous maniac who sits for Ludgershall was the periphrasis attributed to North to indicate the third son of the third Duke of Gordon, who became a lieutenant in the Royal Navy soon after he left Eton, whom spiritual convictions or fantasies, combined with an insane thirst for notoriety, made the President of the Protestant Association, whose sufficient literary monument is *Barnaby Rudge.*

John Wilkes, as belonging to a family once settled in Buckinghamshire, jestingly spoke of himself as the political descendant of John Hampden; the chief political incidents of his life and their constitutional issues are too familiar to leave any excuse for repetition here; his father, a distiller in Clerkenwell, did justice to his sharp son by giving him the education of Leyden University and of foreign travel, for which the lad was prepared by an excellent dissenting minister named Leeson. Whether domestic circumstances more auspicious might have been the prelude to a course less disreputable is an idle speculation. A marriage for money with an unattractive woman of uncongenial temper, more than ten years his senior, was not calculated to correct untoward tendencies. The blunders of the Government of Bute first, of North and Grenville afterwards; the consummate effrontery and the unfailing readiness of the man himself, made Wilkes a personage with the mob; in the House of Commons he made no more mark than was impressed upon it by his notoriety out of doors; if the House laughed, it was at him more than with him. The quick resourcefulness, which formed his greatest quality, was shown in private life, rather than in the House or even on the platform; the most creditable trait in his career was his loyal friendship for Churchill, his colleague in the *North Briton;* in the incidents of this friendship he was seen at his best. When the warrant for his arrest was served upon him, Wilkes pleaded to the officer his immunity from such process as a member of the Lower

House. Churchill, who could claim no such privilege, happened at this moment to call at his friend's residence in Great George Street; it was not, therefore, too late to warn his associate. "Good morrow, Mr. Thompson, does Mrs. Thompson dine in the country to-day?" "Yes, sir, I only called to enquire after your health before myself following her there." Churchill, whose physiognomy was unknown, at once took the hint, secured all his papers, hurried his family out of town, and retained his freedom. "Once he treads this floor," said Canning at St. Stephen's, "no political firebrand need be feared." Wilkes was to prove a case in point; his sonorous platitudes, his wit, diluted by a certain mediocrity, made him the idol of the gallery; in the House itself, he was almost as complete a failure as, in a later century, was to prove Dr. Kenealy, between whom and Wilkes a real parallel might easily be drawn.

Mr. Gladstone has left it on record that of the men with whom he was associated in Palmerston's Administrations, several, whom the world did not know in that character, were sincerely as ostentatiously religious. Lord North's Cabinet and Parliaments, if not eminent for instances of personal piety, contained men who, in this respect, formed notable contrasts to the average parliamentary type in this hard drinking, hard swearing, and fast living age. Such might have been Samuel Johnson, who, next to his Maker, reverenced his King, and was half inclined at one time to enter St. Stephen's as a follower of North.* Such was Lord Dartmouth in his Commoner as well as ennobled days the descendant of Charles I.'s "honest Will Legge." Such, too, was Sir Richard Hill, "friend of King George, but of King Jesus more,"† ridiculed for his quaint Puritanical manner,

* See the correspondence, dated March 30th, 1771, between Strahan, the printer, and one of the Treasury Secretaries.

† See the description in the *Rolliad*.

but universally loved for his courtesy and benevolence, and admitted by all to realise Addison's description of the ideal country gentleman in Sir Roger de Coverley.

The parliamentary elections, held in 1768, were the most corrupt known even in that cynically corrupt and conscience-hardened age. The country, scandalised by the open bartering of seats between men in high places, showed its disgust with the new House by recalling Wilkes to England from his outlawry* and electing him for Middlesex, then by reason of its great numbers, the most important constituency in the kingdom. The House might persist in excluding Wilkes and in keeping him in prison; these tactics only showed how completely the Assembly was out of sympathy with the public opinion, whose representation formed its chief function. Alderman Beckford, whose son wrote *Vathek*, had been in his time the one man whom Chatham took into his confidence; he thus stood in nearly the same relation to the elder Pitt as was afterwards occupied towards the younger by another eminently business man, Henry Dundas; Beckford, and with him Burke, as well as many others, declared the

* Sick of Naples and Paris, Wilkes had craved permission of the Duke of Grafton to pass the residue of his days in some obscure corner of England. The appeal failed. Wilkes proceeded to show himself a power by a pamphlet stating his case, and producing at once such an effect as to encourage him to stand for the City; the brokers organized the bets on his chance into a species of stock, quoted on 'Change like the Tichborne stock of a later day. Defeated for the City, Wilkes, largely through the electioneering of the Rev. Horne-Tooke, of Brentford, was returned by 1,290 votes against the Tory, George Cooke's 827, and against Sir W. B. Procter, the Whig, with 807. Such was the enthusiasm of the mob that the patrician and unbending Duke of Northumberland found his carriage stopped in the street, and himself compelled to toast the loathed Wilkes in a mug of ale, that always made him ill. The Austrian Ambassador, Count Hatzfeldt, was not allowed to continue his drive till the Wilkites had painted the name of their hero and the *North Briton*, number 45, on the back of his coach. After this the journey of Wilkes to his prison was a triumphal progress; the prison itself a home of more power than the palace. The culminating point of victory was reached when the greatest literary and political force of the age, "Junius," pointed his pen for Wilkes against the Duke of Grafton.

offence constituted by Wilkes's writings in the *St. James's Chronicle* and elsewhere to be a matter not for the House, but for the Law Courts to decide; the argument failed; then followed the familiar series of expulsions and re-elections. Meanwhile, February 3rd, 1769, had been witnessed a remarkable scene at St. Stephen's; the popular favourite had been brought from his prison to the Bar of the House. There he stood, uncomely indeed to behold, but unabashed, perfectly composed and entirely unrepentant for the letter, in which he had accused Secretary Weymouth of having suggested to the local authorities that the troops should fire upon the mob; "the next time a minister shall dare to write so bloody a scroll, I will make the same appeal to the nation as I have now done." The sentence of expulsion and of ineligibility for future election was repeated with the same consequences as before; not only did the House prove its impotence to get rid of this unwelcome member; two years later Wilkes himself was chosen Sheriff for London and Middlesex; in 1774 he became, while once more an M.P., Lord Mayor. Not till 1782 were expunged the resolutions, invalidating his election, and did Wilkes actually take his seat; with strong domestic affections, Wilkes combined genuine literary tastes and capacities; all these he gratified after his retirement from public life into the bosom of his family, till, in 1797, forgotten by the public, but remembered as the best of fathers in his home, surrounded by his books and his daughter, he died peacefully in the Isle of Wight.

# CHAPTER XII.

## THE DAYS OF PITT AND FOX.

The publishing of debates in the House—Original motive of secrecy—The importance of the Press greatly increased by the privilege of publishing debates—The beginning of parliamentary reform—George Grenville, Premier—The Stamp Act—Repealed by Rockingham—Grenville best as leader of the Opposition—The deciding of election disputes—Grenville's death divides his party—Charles Fox—His early life—His passion for gambling—His parliamentary aptitude—His winning manners—First returned for Midhurst at the age of nineteen and a half—His skill as a debater—Contrasts between Fox and Pitt—Pitt's precocity as a child—Pitt's contempt for money—Pitt's successful maiden speech—His contests with Fox—Some of Pitt's great orations—Pitt and Fox framed by Nature for opposite parts to those which they afterwards filled—Fox refuses to join Shelburne's Administration—Ascendency of the younger Pitt—Benjamin Franklin's mission—"Single speech" Hamilton—Burke—His appearance—Contrasts between Fox and Burke—Sheridan's maiden speech not a success—Colonel Barré's personal appearance—Dunning—His personal appearance—Admiral Keppel—Hume—Sir George Savile—Introducer of a Catholic Relief Bill—Lord John Cavendish—Higher tone of the House—William Wilberforce—The beginning of the commercial opposition to the Whigs—Growing agitation for reform.

THE parliamentary and electoral corruption of the period not only again brought the Georgian House of Commons into something like the same unpopularity which it had known during the period of the Kentish Petition and Daniel Defoe's "Legion letter"; it enabled Wilkes successfully to pit himself against it, and George III. completely to dominate it. The progressive importance, however, of the Chamber was not for long interfered with by any of these circumstances,

however compromising to its own dignity. Under the third George, the public interest was absorbed by foreign affairs; the debates on these subjects were not unworthy of the best traditions of St. Stephen's; they instructed a country, now thirsting for information, on topics to which, in ordinary times, it was indifferent. Hence the popular demand, daily swelling to irresistible volume, for authentic reports of the discussions, still held with closed doors.

The characteristically and exclusively English House of Commons has, from its earliest days, moved in a sympathy unconsciously close with foreign events. The pecuniary necessities of the Edwards, engaged in their wars with the French as well as the Scotch, first gave the borough members the control of the purse independently of the shire knights, who formed the original nucleus of the Chamber. The deepening determination of the constituencies towards the close of the eighteenth century accurately to inform themselves on the principles of the external policy of the Government, was the immediate cause of the regular publication of the Imperial Parliament's debates; up to 1770 the insistance in the House upon its privileges had prevented any other reports save mock accounts of what was done and said in the "Senate of Lilliput." Samuel Johnson's narratives in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of speeches, delivered at Westminster, were at best vague recollections and in no sense reports. The original motives for secrecy had been the necessity or desire of the House to protect itself against the Sovereign; the Long Parliament had permitted the publication of its "Diurnal Occurrences"; that was discontinued on the Restoration; meanwhile, Sir Edward Dering had been expelled for printing his speeches without leave from the Chair; formally this law against publicity had at no time been relaxed. But with the accession of George I. accounts of the debates had been regularly published in Boyer's *Historical*

*Register*, and were continued for more than twenty years, to 1737; afterwards these short summaries were expanded in the pages of the *Gentleman*; the House had, indeed, unanimously voted, February 26th, 1729, it to be an indignity and breach of privilege for anyone, in newspapers or elsewhere, to print such narratives or reports; that resolution was verbally confirmed ten years later, though only after a debate, wherein was strongly pointed out the danger of bringing the privileges and practices of the House into conflict with the liberty of the Press; that was the warning, among others, of Walpole, who had always shown himself better disposed towards the Press than most parliamentarians of his time; in 1747, Cave, of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, was reported to pay members for supplying him with an abstract of the speeches; he denied the charge with the indignation of innocence, professed his contrition for anything he might have done amiss, and, threatened with Newgate, was released on payment of his fees, and on promise of better behaviour. In 1771, when the Wilkes excitement was at its height, the House issued a proclamation forbidding parliamentary reports of any kind; six printers disobeyed; they were summoned to the Bar of the House; one of the number, refusing to appear, was arrested by the Serjeant-at-Arms. On this, the City magistrates annulled as illegal the House of Commons' proclamation, and imprisoned the House of Commons' messenger employed to arrest the printer; the House promptly retaliated by sending the Lord Mayor to the Tower; but public opinion had now visibly and formidably ranged itself on the side of the Press and the City officials against the House. The attempt to forbid the publication of debates finally dropped, even though to this day such publication may theoretically be a breach of privilege.

Now begins, more than half a century before the first instalment of parliamentary reform, an entirely new era at St.

Stephen's; the publication of debates implies the direct responsibility of members to their constituents; thus the parliamentary columns of the modern newspaper not only have taken the English people inside the Chamber, they have, in a very real sense, made the whole public members of the Assembly; nor in any other way could journalism have become the profession it now is, and the Press deserve its modern title of the Fourth Estate of the realm. Other changes, scarcely less important, were now going forward in the domestic economy of the House, as well as in its relations with the public; at one of the general elections, held during this period, the borough of Gatton had been openly sold for £75,000; so little had availed to check corruption that the Bribery Act of Newcastle, in 1762, made the offence punishable by heavy penalties in money. Another parliamentary scandal had always been the trial of election petitions; these investigations, conducted before the whole House sitting in committee, had resolved themselves into tests of party strength; on such an issue (the Chippenham case), it will be remembered, had Walpole fallen in 1742. George Grenville, the object of the elder Pitt's taunt, which fastened on him the name of the "gentle shepherd," as Premier for a short time in 1765, accomplished, in the American Stamp Act, the work which his successor, Rockingham, was called in to undo; hard, pedantic, and austere, Grenville exercised no conciliatory influence at St. Stephen's; the debate which, February 1766, was followed by the cancelling of the Stamp Act, lasted throughout the whole night; the lobbies were crowded till daybreak with City merchants and Colonial partisans, waiting in all the exhaustion of excitement to know how the division had gone. At this moment the unpopular ex-minister appeared; as he walked through the corridor he was hooted; timidity of any kind was not among his faults; facing the hissing crowd, Grenville seized the chief sibilator by the

throat; the man took it good-naturedly, saying, with a broad grin, "If I may not hiss, I must laugh"; the rest, half admiring the statesman's pluck, burst into a cachinnatory chorus; amid such sounds Grenville safely passed out of the precinct.

While titularly Premier, Grenville had not been highly distinguished in the House; when managing the Opposition to his successor North, he had shown himself in the best sense a leader at St. Stephen's; early in the year 1770, during whose November he died, he successfully attempted to raise the tone of public life by terminating the scandalous system of deciding election disputes. "A House of twenty or thirty members, half asleep during the examination of witnesses at the Bar, the other half absent during the greater part of time at Arthur's or Almack's, therefore in complete ignorance of the case, returning to vote so intoxicated that they could scarcely speak or stand"; such, according to Thomas Townshend,* was the tribunal which had adjudicated upon these constitutional controversies, since they first arose, till within the last generation of the eighteenth century. Townshend's description, just cited, is to be found in his speech during the debate of 1774, on the motion to render Grenville's Act perpetual; the measure itself had been introduced the last day of February, 1770. Grenville's proposal was, in brief, to transfer the hearing of election petitions from the whole House in committee to a committee of thirteen members, selected from forty-nine, chosen by ballot, together with one nominee of each party; practically the House was unanimous in favour of the reform; North admitted the shameful reality of the evil, and the statesmanlike merit of the remedy, but wished for time to think it over, and, if pressed to pronounce

* Eldest son of Thomas Townshend, and grandson of second Viscount Townshend, born 1733; Lord Shelburne's Secretary of State 1782; Lord Sydney 1783; in connection with Burke, mentioned by Goldsmith in *Retaliation*—

"Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat
To persuade Tommy Townshend to give him a vote."

upon the matter then, feared he must vote against it; the ministerial resistance was as insincere as unsuccessful; "better to bear with the devil you do know, than to fly to the devil you don't"; such, the gossips of the lobby said, was the sum of the Northite objections; the country gentlemen were conjured by the spirit of Shakespeare to bear such evils as they suffered, rather than fly to others that they knew not of; many of these squires had short memories; most of them remembered that during the Whig despotism, under which they had long groaned, they had often suffered ejection from their own counties and boroughs under the system which they were now entreated to perpetuate. If in his life Grenville made some effort in the direction of parliamentary purity, his death, happening when it did, contributed not a little to the organization of parties both in the Commons and in the country; the Grenville connection, incarnated in himself, had for a time superseded the two political associations in the State. Himself not less of a partisan than either of the Pitts at his best, Grenville had followers equally among the Tories and the Whigs; on his disappearance, the Tory Grenvilleites returned to their original allegiance; the others, ceasing to be Grenvilleites, became Whigs once more, now ranged under Rockingham chiefs. Thus the way had become clear for those politicians who were to be the founders of the new Toryism, but who now, under the mighty banner of Chatham, were led by men like Shelburne and Temple, standing aloof from both of the great traditional factions, and looking for support, as from the first the elder Pitt had done, not to any single parliamentary group, or even exclusively to the existing constituencies, but trusting rather to the approval and maintenance of reasonable patriots on both sides, and also to as yet unrepresented masses. Such were the conditions and properties of the social and political soil at Westminster in which the rival talents of Charles Fox and of

William Pitt found their nourishment and their opportunity during the later years of the Georgian era.

In 1767, the first Lady Holland, wife of the Whig Paymaster General, Henry Fox, was on a visit to Lady Chatham; there she saw little William Pitt, a prodigy of childish cleverness, who, she predicted, "will be a thorn in Charles's side as long as he lives"; the next year at the General Election of 1768, before he was legally of age, the voters of Midhurst returned at the head of the poll a youth, personally noticeable for his swarthy complexion, always lightened by a smile of amiability and intelligence, who at Eton and at Oxford always living in the fastest and costliest set, had carried away from both places all not only of the classical, but the modern literature and learning, that these seats of education could impart; before entering Parliament, Charles James Fox had become as well-known in the chief circles of European fashion and dissipation, as in the most exclusive clubs of St. James's and Pall Mall; he played whist so uniformly well, that, with a little care, he might have made a regular income out of the game; but his winnings at whist at Brooks's, more than disappeared over the hazard tables at Almack's;* Boothby, his most intimate acquaintance, when the two were known as fast young men about Town, estimated him correctly enough when he talked of Charles's first-rate talents, but deficiency in judgment so incorrigible as to prevent his achieving any great success in the three passions of his life—politics, women, and play. Yet in politics certainly, Fox possessed every conceivable qualification for supreme success—fine abilities, informed with knowledge, strengthened by real systematic study, debating power and readiness, which would have been remarkable at any period in St. Stephen's, and which, in his

* This gambling club belonged to the proprietor of the Assembly Rooms in King Street, St. James's; it stood in Pall Mall, nearly on the same spot now occupied by the Marlborough Club.

own, was unsurpassed; he had also those advantages of birth and connection, useful under more democratic conditions of public life, and at that oligarchic and exclusive period practically indispensable if the first prizes were to be won. As in the case of Bolingbroke, whom next to the classical Alcibiades, Charles Fox most closely resembled; his strength was also his weakness; "a charming, pernicious, irresistible devil." Jeffrey's description of the Byron of Don Juan, would have exactly fitted Fox; the power of adapting his speech to any audience, in or out of the House, he might address, his manners and conversation to any society that he wished to win, invested him with a real fascination for those with whom he was brought into personal contact; hence, his rival Pitt's reply to the Frenchman, surprised at the control of the Commons possessed by the ruined gamester and roué, "You have not been under the wand of the magician." Nor did Fox lack some of those moral or constitutional attributes that public men, strained by a chronic anxiety, have found necessary or invaluable supplements to their aptitude for affairs; he was never deserted by a happy capacity for divesting himself of worry and dismissing all unpleasant thoughts at will. A dean of Christchurch, Gaisford, in the generation following the undergraduateship of Fox at Hertford, described the advantages of a classical education as enabling us to look down upon our inferiors, and as opening to us posts, to which emolument as attached both in this world and that which is to come. A born aristocrat, though a professed cosmopolitan, Fox felt his instinct of patrician exclusiveness as well as his literary taste gratified by the intelligent familiarity with Greek and Latin writers, which he carried away with him from Eton, and which he never lost amid the distractions and vicissitudes of his tempestuous course; the most genuine of natures may not be without some touch of the actor; Chatham's moral and patriotic earnestness was consistent with an

inveterate addiction of histrionic pose; nor may Fox have been without a presentiment of the coming call when a visitor, who had seen him beggared overnight at faro, found his friend next morning tranquilly absorbed in Herodotus as the one resource for "a man who had lost his last shilling." Fox was less than nineteen and a half on his return for Midhurst in May 1768; having been, according to his own account, returned during his absence abroad, he only came back to England in the next November; he did not deliver his maiden speech till March 9th, 1769; being then a little more than twenty, he appeared as a champion of the Royal prerogative, a supporter of the Tory North, a denouncer of John Wilkes and of the Middlesex electors, who had disregarded the order both of Commons and Crown by choosing once more their proscribed member; on this occasion, Fox had sat up drinking all the night before, had never been in bed, had, in this crapulous state, just arrived from Newmarket at St. Stephen's; a hurried sketch of the orator, still preserved at Holland House, gives an idea of his animated and fiery manner as well as of his imperfect toilet, his unkempt and dissipated look.* As a debater, the great skill of Fox was seen not only in unfailing resourcefulness of reply, but in a singular power of summarising the arguments of adversaries in the form most formidable to himself and then disposing of them.

The chief respect in which might be traced a resemblance between Charles Fox and William Pitt, was their both being the younger sons of distinguished fathers, who were also rivals in public life; "Do not break his spirit" was the caution ever impressed by Lord Holland upon his brilliant and wayward boy's tutors and governors. "You must recollect," was the constant reminder, addressed by his father to the second

* In 1769 note-books and paper of any kind were not allowed in the gallery; the portrait now mentioned was improvised with a pencil on a fragment of linen.

son, in whom Lady Holland had foreseen the thorn in Charles's side, "you will not be like your brother, Lord Chatham"; "No," rejoined the high-spirited lad, "but I shall be William Pitt." The boy's reply was largely prophetic of the man's character and career; proud, sensitive, self-reliant, isolated, and confident, the younger Pitt had been from his childhood, and remained till his death; in very different ways, Fox and Pitt could both be students; Fox, however, was as self-indulgent in his studies as in his pleasures; his rival read as an intellectual discipline. Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was then marking a new era in economical science; while yet a youth, Pitt had thoroughly mastered it, grinding the edge of his intellect against it, much as Samuel Johnson in his seventieth year tested and exercised his mental power by setting himself to learn the Dutch language; for such efforts, Chatham had, almost from the nursery, trained his son by making him translate aloud into his best English the stiffest pieces of Tacitus and Thucydides. For Fox, fortune seemed to have made everything easy; the first years of his rival's course were a nearly unbroken struggle against difficulties and vexations, that would have crushed smaller men.

As the son of Chatham, Pitt had been made free of both Chambers; while yet a child, he is said to have been carried to St. Stephen's to hear the last speech as a Commoner of that father, at whose last appearance as Chatham in the Lords, he filled so pathetically filial a part; in early boyhood, his attention to the turns of debate, to the niceties of thrust and parry, shown by oratorical experts, has been compared to the closeness with which a careful student at an hospital follows every movement in a surgical operation by a master hand; whether the scene should be the Upper or the Lower House may be doubtful; but it was certainly on one of these occasions that the boy, standing within the space allotted to privy councillors and their sons, was joined by Fox, eleven

years his senior and already of established fame, and freely criticised to his famous senior the speeches to which they were listening. "Surely, Mr. Fox, the Speaker lays himself open to this retort," etc.; the story is told by Fox himself, who saw in the amazing precocity a confirmation of his mother's famous prediction as to the future rivalry between the two. In his lofty disinterestedness and patriotic fervour, Pitt resembled his father; always a poor man, frequently harassed for ready money, he never, as was insinuated, used his knowledge for "City" purposes; as a fact, he once with characteristic naïveté, said to his friend, Raikes, when Governor of the Bank of England, "So little do public events influence the financial system, that, had I, with all my means of information, turned speculator I should long since have been a ruined man." In personal presence and bearing the young member, whom the Lowther interest had returned for Appleby, and who, in the debate on Burke's Civil List proposal, February 26th, 1781, made his maiden speech, presented a marked contrast to his famous father; he spoke, indeed, with a fluency, a method, a precision, as well as a dignity, which usually follow from long practice; but his figure was disproportionately tall; his mien ungraceful; his gesture, when he used it, artificial and stiff. No first appearance was ever more of an immediate triumph; Lord North waddled up to shake the debutant's hand, and tell him it was the best first speech he had ever heard; Fox immediately afterwards proposed the new member for Brooks's Club, but had been disappointed in finding him turn from the gambling table with cold disgust; yet now the older man's eyes, filled with tears of gererous emotion as correcting the compliment of another bystander, he congratulated his rival on being already one of the first men in the House. "It is not," murmured Burke, "a chip of the old block; it is the old block himself"; on this, another spectator whispered, "Not

quite; the old block's head was beautiful, and his eyes always brilliant with intelligence." But the most remarkable comment came from an old member of forgotten name. "Ay, Mr. Fox, you may well praise young Pitt for his speech; there's no man here except you, who could do the like; old as I am, I expect to hear you both battling it within these walls, as your fathers did before you"; on the next, or nearly the next, occasion that the chances of debate brought these two names together, February 21st, 1783, Pitt, as Shelburne's deputy, defended the Peace of Paris against Fox, who had attacked it with astounding vigour; during that harangue, nausea compelled Pitt to hurry to the door, known as Solomon's Porch, behind the Speaker's chair; here, supporting himself by a pillar, amid frequent vomiting fits, he put his disengaged hand to his ear so as to catch his rival's words within the House; he missed nothing, and dealt with the arguments a few days later, when the discussion was renewed. The Slave Trade oration, winding up the debate at daybreak as already mentioned, may have been Pitt's most artistic effort; his most effective speech belonged to his closing years; war had been declared on May 18th, 1803; between the 20th and the 24th of that month, took place a famous debate, that called forth Pitt on the first and Fox on the second night; parliamentary critics, who could recall the traditions of Sir Benjamin Rudyard's silver tones in the seventeenth century, fancied they could hear the echoes of these in the clear harmonious ring of the younger Pitt's admirably managed voice and thrillingly distinct enunciation; these qualities had never impressed the Assembly so much as upon this occasion; the House had been exhausted by a prolix harangue from Hawkesbury; its patience was further tried by Erskine and Whitbread, who occupied more than an hour and a half between them; after these a murmur of expectancy ran round the benches; the great man was coming in. With

the slow, long, stately stride, habitual to him, with eyes averted alike from friends or foes on either side, and fixed only on the Chair or the ceiling, the former minister walked to his place; to-day it is not unusual for a favourite speaker to be cheered before he opens his lips; then, it would seem, without precedent; while he was still about to rise from his seat, the Chamber rang with cries of "Mr. Pitt," and of "Hear him"; the system of parliamentary reporting, though then licensed, was still imperfect; the clapping of hands in the gallery and the applause in the body of the House, have deprived us of a verbal record of the sentences, which produced so supreme an effect. Lord Brougham, who gave the testimony of actual listeners, believed absolutely Pitt's finest effort to have been the declaration on the Peace of 1783, whose condemnation by the House ousted Shelburne with Pitt from office, and brought in the Coalition. The Whig squires taunted Pitt with having been "taught by his dad on a stool"; certainly his most famous deliverances smelt of the lamp; they were in what Windham called the State paper style, as of one, who "could speak a King's speech off-hand"; whatever the process, all the evidence goes to show that no greater effect had ever been produced at St. Stephen's, than when, referring to the Coalition of North and Fox, Pitt condemned it in the famous phrase, "If this unauspicious union be not already consummated, in the name of my country, I forbid the banns." Nor could there be a greater proof of his unique power over the House than that, when relaxing the elevated declamation which was his forte, and stooping to his foible of jocosity, Pitt proved no less successful. Such proved the case when, alluding to his absence of supporters in a division, he described himself as "Eve in the garden of God, single and naked, yet not ashamed." The sarcasm, which he could employ as effectively as his father, seems to have been shown at its best in a speech on the Additional Force

Bill, delivered during the invasion scare of 1805. The parallel between the younger Pitt and the Athenian statesman has passed into a platitude; one feature sometimes omitted makes it closer than such analogies generally are; not only did Pitt, like Pericles, owe his power to his oratory; he resembled the classical statesman in some of the circumstances connected with his fall; the fine and imprisonment of his friend Phidias, the sculptor, were more than Pericles could support; the impeachment and disgrace of Lord Melville (Henry Dundas) conspired with the defeat of Austerlitz to break the spirit of Pitt.

Of the two rivals it is a truism to say that the irony of fortune cast William Pitt and Charles Fox, for parts exactly the opposite of those which nature had formed them to fill; by birth, taste, and association, Fox, who had begun life as champion of the Court against Jack Wilkes, and whom later a committee of aristocratic Whigs chose for their manager in the Commons, seemed the destined defender of the Royal prerogative, and of the patrician framework of the whole polity against all vulgar attacks. Pitt, on the other hand, the son of a poor man, with, with an income of his own not exceeding £300 a year, like his father derived his political authority not, as did Fox, from an aristocratic cabal, but from the confidence of the country, from that father too, he inherited a zeal for parliamentary reform. The acceptance by Pitt of the office refused by Fox, gave to the son of Chatham his great official opportunity, and doomed the son of Holland to perpetual exclusion from power, save for some nine months of his short life. In July, 1782, Lord Rockingham's death dissolved the Government of the more advanced Whigs; the succession fell to the Chatham faction of that party under the leading depositary of the Chatham tradition; Fox and Burke had resigned the service of the Crown on the late Premier's death. The King authorised an invitation to Fox to return,

it was conveyed by Pitt; on his hearing that Shelburne was to be First Lord, Fox told Pitt he could not withdraw his resignation; the two men parted never in private to meet again. So, in the next century, after the fourteenth Lord Derby's failure to unite under himself against Palmerston the two rival Commoners, did Benjamin Disraeli and W. E. Gladstone part in a St. James's Square drawing-room, always thereafter to find themselves pitted against each other.

Re-union between the Chatham and Rockingham faction of the Whig Party at Westminster had proved impossible; afterwards, in 1804, when all factions were combined against Addington, it seemed once more practicable; but Pitt did not on a certain night meet Fox at the supper-table at Brooks's; the project finally fell through. Now, in 1782, if the more strenuous Whigs at St. Stephen's were not to resign themselves to impotence, they must treat with the Opposition instead of the Ministry. Hence the series of events which, beginning with the North and Fox coalition, under the Duke of Portland's nominal Premiership, ended in the promotion by the Commons and entire country of William Pitt, in his twenty-fifth year, to a supremacy as complete as had been ever enjoyed by his father.

During the January of 1766, for the first time in its existence, the House witnessed the scene which converted it for the time into an Imperial tribunal, and seemed to realise for it Edmund Burke's conception as the senate of an empire greater than Rome, or any other Power had known. A knocking was heard at the outer door; the Serjeant-at-Arms ushered to the Bar a stranger of some sixty years, remarkable for the sturdiness of his frame, the respectful independence of his bearing, and the Puritan simplicity of his dress. This was Benjamin Franklin, specially sent to England by his compatriots across the Atlantic to plead the cause against the policy of Grenville and the King in the popular Assembly;

the partial success of this mission, shown by Rockingham's repeal of the Stamp Act, chiefly at the instance of his illustrious private secretary, Burke; how that repeal was cancelled or frustrated by the Declaratory Act; how there followed a war, which only terminated in the protesting and intractable Colonies becoming the nucleus of the Power known as the United States—these things belong rather to the international annals of two kindred peoples than to the history of a single Chamber.

This, indeed, was the era which witnessed the already-mentioned expansion of the House of Commons from a local Assembly into an Imperial Senate; the first Irish Viceroy of George III. had been Lord Halifax, whose secretary, William Gerrard Hamilton, best known from his prefix of "Single-speech," originating in the fact not that while combining the Irish Exchequer Chancellorship with membership at St. Stephen's he spoke only once, but that his later efforts never equalled his maiden address, delivered in 1755, proposing to raise six Roman Catholic regiments in Ireland for the support of Portugal; the suggestion was crushed by the Protestant vote; Hamilton, in Horace Walpole's words, had broken out when nobody suspected it; the contents of his posthumous volume, *Parliamentary Logic*, prove this effort to have been by no means a solitary utterance; Hamilton's official course in Ireland began in 1761, when he was accompanied thither by Edmund Burke, whom he thus introduced to public life.* In 1765 the collision between the obstinacy of the King and the obstinacy of his minister, Grenville, had given a shock to George III., which determined him to find

* With Francis, Lord George Sackville, Dr. Wilmot, and others, including Burke himself, Hamilton has been identified with "Junius," as some of his contemporaries thought, with more probability; Mrs. Thrail (Piozzi), who personally saw the effect on this reputed "Junius" of some words on the subject from Dr. Johnson, supports this view. (Wraxall's *Memoirs*, Vol. I., p. 344 footnote.)

a new Government; hence that Administration of Lord Rockingham—a statesman of tastes and qualities that equally recall the Lord Althorp of the past and the Lord Hartington, now Duke of Devonshire, of the present; for these pages, the chief interest of that Government comes from the fact that it witnessed, in the December of 1765, the advent to St. Stephen's of the member for its chief's pocket borough of Wendover; Lord Verney, Irish by birth, but representing Buckinghamshire in the Commons, was the local magnate whose influence, secured by Rockingham, had immediately given Burke his seat. An ungainly figure and bearing, with eyes flashing intellect through large round spectacles, in Quaker-like dress, the coat-pockets bulging out with papers —such in appearance was the clever Irishman who had for some years been pushing his London fortunes by his pen, who was generally known as having glorified by rare genius and learning the business of a bookseller's hack, and specially identified with the first historical year-book started in England, the Annual Register, which Dodsley, the publisher, had set up; long before the Buckinghamshire borough gave him a place at St. Stephen's young Burke had regularly listened to the debates in the Strangers' Gallery, observing the speeches and speakers as closely as the youthful Pitt himself; Demosthenes and Cicero had both been detected in the modern parliamentarians by the encyclopædic lad, born at Dublin (January 12th, 1729), but of Limerick origin, with the Cork brogue still rich upon him; *nitor in adversum* was the motto, whose truth he had exemplified; he had quarrelled with his first patron, Hamilton, because, engaged for a private secretary, he would not become a mere bond-slave; yet he had travelled more, and with richer mental profit, than any duke's son fresh from the grand tour; in naivety of treatment, of mood, in versatility of argument, in affluence of imagination, he soon placed himself at the head of the orators of his time,

with, perhaps, the exception of Fox, in knowledge and culture Burke's equal, in all those arts and accomplishments, which make success in a popular Assembly, infinitely Burke's superior; the representative of Wendover was at once the first member for the Empire ever sent to the House, and the most remarkable educational force for elevating the tone and increasing the instructiveness of its debates whom it had known. During the session of 1776 Fox had not, with Lord North beside him, taken his place on the front Opposition bench; he sat on the third row behind, close to a pillar supporting the gallery, and near the Speaker's chair; when, January 27th, 1766, Burke rose for his maiden speech, on the complaints of the American colonists, Charles Fox had not, of course, entered the House; between the two men, both reputed Whig leaders, but with little in common besides the name, whose personal friendship political difference was to close, the connection at St. Stephen's was limited to the fact that they both sat in the same part of the Chamber; in all externals the contrast was complete; the figure of Fox, indeed, inclined to corpulence, lacked, like that of Burke, anything which could be called neatness; the bearing of Burke, however, at every point revealed the bookman; Fox, during his earlier years in the House, dressed as a fop, wearing a hat with a feather in it; in his maturity that toilet was exchanged for the blue frock-coat and the buff waistcoat; these were the colours of the uniforms worn by Washington and the American insurgents; they henceforth became to the Whigs what Corsican violets were to the Bonapartists or the white rose to the Stuarts; Fox's Stuart ancestry, through his mother, a Richmond Lennox, might be traced in the dark, harsh, saturnine features, as of Charles II., to which a frowning majesty seemed added by black and shaggy eyebrows; during his *petit maitre* period, both Fox and Lord Carlisle wore shoes with red heels; then his seat was on

the Speaker's left hand, near the Chair, in the third row behind, close to one of the gallery pillars: not till 1782 did the blue frock-coated and yellow-vested dandy regularly occupy the front Opposition bench.

Burke's imperial intellect was unapproached by any other Irish member of the Opposition in the eighteenth century: though at least one surpassed him in brilliancy and wit, and more than one were near him in the first parliamentary rank. On November 20th, 1780, a young man, apparently less than thirty, whose face, radiant with intellect, also bore signs of irregular life, caught the Speaker's eye, and rose to complain of the facility and impunity accorded to vexatious and libellous petitions, charging members with bribery on grounds frivolous or false; the speaker presented himself as a victim of this system, together with his colleague for Stafford, Edward Moncton; Rigby ridiculed the complaint in some bullying remarks; Charles Fox supported his friend, who was well received, less for what he then said than because he had written the *Duenna*, the *School for Scandal*, and the *Critic;* it was after this speech that Woodfall, the printer, meeting Sheridan, and depreciating his first performance in the House, caused him, as he thoughtfully rested his head upon his hand, fervently to exclaim, "By Heaven, it is in me, and it shall come out!" Near this bright, erratic spirit stood the ponderous and powerful form of Colonel Isaac Barré,* possessor of a voice which commanded attention by deafening rather than by argument; he was, however, always master of his subject. His shaggy and ferocious aspect: the acute loss of one eye and the weakness of the other, won Barré the nickname of Belisarius, and obscured his abilities and accomplishments, which were great. Barré came from the same

* Born 1726; at Quebec under Wolfe; Governor of Stirling Castle for services in America; voted against Shelburne; lost his appointments; pensioned by Rockingham; made Clerk of the Pells by Pitt.

county as Burke; he had, in Sheridan's words, "grinned horribly like a dog" when Lord North, who alone could compete with Sheridan in wit and readiness, with Fox in scholarship, was roused out of sleep by Burke's false quantity in *vectigal.* On the same Opposition, and to a large extent Irish, bench sat a man who, triumphant over the severest combination of physical disadvantages which Nature's malignancy could inflict, never rose without holding the charmed attention of the House till he sat down again; Dunning had a face the reverse of comely; he suffered under chronic weakness of body, expressing itself in awkwardness of movement and gesture; his voice was unmusical and so husky that the process of clearing his throat gave a signal more audible than any articulate sound of his intention to address the House; his diction and arguments were those of the special pleader rather than a debater, but he held the attention of the Assembly, which became really fond, not only of his voice, but of his unprepossessing face—a face that its possessor never tired of viewing in the looking-glass. Near these two representatives of Lord Shelburne's borough of Calne, that was afterwards to send Robert Lowe to St. Stephen's, sat two sailors, whose peculiarities of appearance gave them a personal prominence in the Georgian House, comparable with that claimed by their nautical successors in Victorian days; these were William Admiral Keppel, whose blunt manners and seafaring assumption of good-fellowship had commended him to the London tradesmen, who then returned two members for Surrey;* Keppel's passages of arms with his rival, Palliser, at first enlivened and then began to weary the House. The second naval commander who trod the floor of the House at this time as if it had been a quarter-deck was Howe,† best known among sailors and to history as "Black

* Second son of second Earl of Albemarle. Distinguished at Ushant and elsewhere.

† Like Keppel had served under Anson; not made an earl till 1797.

Dick" (his complexion came from his grandfather, George I., his mother having been that King's daughter by the Royal mistress, Von Platen, Lady Darlington); Burke had called obscurity the source of the sublime; Howe, sitting in the shadow of the Chair, and almost invisible, as well as unintelligible, was pointed to as an illustration of that remark.

Of greater political importance were two other figures in the House—one sitting for Yorkshire, colloquially called its uncrowned King, Sir George Saville, called by Burke a true genius; a man of great wealth and princely ways, he once served as juror on a trial, in which the plaintiff demanded £1,500; the obstinacy of his colleagues compelled him reluctantly to acquiesce in a verdict for the defendant; immediately afterwards, Saville wrote the plaintiff a cheque for his full claim; Saville, too, by introducing the Bill for Roman Catholic Relief, had really been the cause of the Lord George Gordon "No Popery" riots. Not far from Saville sat a member whose exterior was that of a yeoman or a mechanic, but on whose features Nature had stamped nothing else than a manifest honesty and high-mindedness to proclaim him one of her born noblemen; such was Lord John Cavendish, brother of William, fourth Duke of Devonshire, who to this day has transmitted to his descendants those qualities which chiefly entitle them, as they did him, to national confidence and respect; his portraits show Lord John to have possessed the large, well-moulded nose, the yeoman-like presence, and the same pride of simplicity in dress that the House has since learned to associate with the Cavendish clan; as leader at St. Stephen's, John Cavendish displayed the vigorous authority by which a sixth-form boy at a public school preserves order and wins respect; in this, as in other details, he was the true predecessor of a later leader of the House, that Lord Hartington who took up the reins of power when Mr. Gladstone, in 1874, had let them fall. With North's resigna-

tion had ended the King's personal control of the House; the Rockingham Whigs came in in 1782; Cavendish, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, was the first to lead a House wherein the Court party had not the ascendancy. Cavendish, too, wisely advised the House to abandon its control over the Irish Parliament, and advocated a like conciliatory policy towards America as well (then possessing a population of 3,000,000, thinly scattered along the Atlantic coast-line, soon to grow to 40,000,000, covering the whole country between the Atlantic and the Pacific).

In a sense entirely new, the eighteenth century House had become the reflection of the higher teaching and tendencies of the time; the humanitarian religion of Wesley asserted on two subjects its influence at St. Stephen's—the impeachment of Warren Hastings and the movement against the slave trade. The Indian pro-consul was acquitted; the moral effect of his arraignment remained. During these years a friend of William Pitt, who had ridden into the House on the crest of the wave of national enthusiasm for his chief, in 1783, William Wilberforce, successively member for Hull and for Yorkshire, together with his friend, Henry Thornton, was organising a little party at his early dinner-table in Palace Yard, where he lived; somewhat too serious and didactic for the House in its easier moods, this earnest reformer had yet a magnetic attraction for it; the open House, which, much as Pym had done a hundred and fifty years before, Wilberforce kept at Westminster, may have helped the movement, but did not prevent the Bill failing through the indifference of the Assembly at the opposition of the Liverpool West India interest.

But the dawn of a new era of reform was being hastened by influence of forces, now felt for the first time at St. Stephen's; between 1765-92, Watt's steam engine created a prosperous industrial class; now commenced the commercial opposition

to the Whig aristocracy and the decisive tendency towards electoral reform; power rapidly gravitated from the Whig families to the middle-class, whose fortunes were rooted in commerce; for the first time, the constituencies complained of the waste at St. Stephen's of the nation's time and money in governing the country; but for the present, the House itself was in direct antagonism to the popular feeling outside, and in close sympathy with the territorial interest as against the representatives of the new wealth. This was natural enough in an Assembly which, like the Lower House, had grown out of the efforts and ability of the county members before the boroughs had become a power. Pitt, as leader of the House, when Shelburne was Chancellor of the Exchequer, like his father before him, saw the necessity of electoral reform, to make the Chamber an organ of the people; the measure to that end, introduced by him, was defeated by the Rockingham Whigs under Burke and Fox. Instead of reforming itself, the House did what it could to neutralise Court corruption by unseating the holders of Government contracts and disfranchising revenue officers; the power of the executive was thus diminished in some seventy boroughs; members became less amenable to direct bribery. The Chamber wherein they sat seemed as far off as ever from being properly representative of, or directly responsible to, the people; the Whigs vied with the Eldonian Tories in resisting any popularization of Parliament. On Rockingham's death, Charles Fox had claimed the Premiership for himself, not as a successful competitor with Pitt for the national leadership, but as the executive nominee of an aristocratic Whig committee; except at moments under Pitt, the House now generally misrepresented the constituencies; the controversy caused by the Whig East India Bill was a fight between the commercial interest and the Whig aristocracy; the Commons by accepting it showed itself entirely out of touch with the con-

stituencies; the King and the Peers, by rejecting the measure, increased their popularity and their power; thus, when in the situation thus created, Pitt was the only possible Premier, he took office as the man, not so much of the King, but of the people; that Premier of five-and-twenty falsified all Fox's confident anticipations of "being in within a fortnight," refused to be coerced into dissolution, and against hostile majorities of the House was kept in office by popular addresses from the Whig corporation of London, and the Tory University of Oxford. Although parties were not then organized on their present hard and fast lines, but shaded imperceptibly into each other; although the unity of the Cabinet was still a doctrine, imperfectly understood; while ever since, as before, the Revolution, the most capable ministries had united in their ranks sometime adversaries, yet the memory of the North and Fox Coalition still scandalising the country, made Pitt's position inexpugnable, and gave him, as statesman of the commercial classes, the same kind of ascendancy which Walpole had secured by gifts, not dissimilar to Pitt's—by an innate love of peace, capacity for business, knowledge of finance, as well as by an easy if less majestic flow of sonorous commonplace. As parliamentary reformer, Pitt's course was a succession of failures; in 1783, he had reintroduced a measure, disfranchising only boroughs convicted of corruption, adding one hundred to the county members; that was thrown out by a majority of two to one; to secure, in the popular Chamber, a real reflection of the nation's life and interests, was the task inherited by Pitt from Chatham; but before Pitt's day, others had been working to Pitt's end. In 1645, Sir F. Dashwood had moved an amendment to the Address in favour of reform; in 1780, the Duke of Richmond brought in a motion for the same purpose; in 1785, Pitt himself introduced fresh reform proposals, to be negatived by two hundred and ninety-

three to one hundred and forty-nine; in 1790, Flood pressed the same revolution with signal failure; in 1809, Sir Francis Burdett brought forward his enfranchising plan, but secured only fifteen votes against one hundred and seventy-four.

# CHAPTER XIII.

## FROM PITT TO CANNING.

The eve of the Irish Union—Chatham's opinion on an Irish Union—Last meeting of the Irish Parliament—Compensation paid to Irish borough-mongers—Previous independence of the Irish Parliament—Speakers for and against the Union—Lord Castlereagh—Biographical notice—An indifferent speaker—Addington—His appearance—Canning offered a seat by Pitt—Defends Dundas—His oratory—His writing in the *Anti-Jacobin*—Refuses to serve under Perceval—William Lamb (Lord Melbourne)—His demeanour—His speaking—George Ponsonby—George Tierney—Biographical notice—Whig jealousy of Tierney—His duel with Pitt—Brougham—His versatility—His collision with Canning—Plunket—His appearance—A champion of Catholic emancipation—Grattan—His manner of speaking—Speakers Mitford and Abbot—Abbot's casting vote—Catholic emancipation carried—Notable speakers for and against.

THE disappearance of Pitt and Fox from St. Stephen's and the great parliamentary change effected by the former statesman were followed by the creation of a new House of Commons within a chamber sufficiently enlarged to admit the Irish members now transferred from College Green to Westminster; in effect, though not in form, the policy of Pitt had been anticipated by Cromwell; as has been noticed at its proper place in these pages, a legislative union between the two countries actually existed during the Commonwealth. Cromwell's ascendancy in the Long Parliament was shown by the presence of thirty Irish, as well as of thirty Scotch members, first in the House of Commons of 1654, afterwards

in all the succeeding Houses of that Republican interval in the national history. With the Restoration came back the old constituencies and the former legislative separation; in view of the parliamentary distinctions of his descendants, it is interesting to notice that the Sir William Petty, the enlightened scientific statesman and economist of the seventeenth century, from whose marriage with the Baroness Shelburne in her own right sprang the Peers of that title and of Lansdowne, had, in his *Political Anatomy of Ireland*,* warmly urged a return to the Cromwellian expedient; to transmute one people into the other, thoroughly to unite interests upon natural and lasting principles; this, said Petty, was the only way to prevent Ireland continuing, as she had been for five hundred years, a loss and a charge to England. To Pitt the question possessed an hereditary interest, which the miscarriage of his Irish proposals had not abated; Chatham may possibly have changed his views on the subject; in or about 1763, it seems beyond doubt that he had mentioned an incorporating union as a matter of salutary importance to Great Britain, and as a measure which, he hoped at one time, might be carried by himself; Shelburne, indeed, who enjoyed more of his master's confidence than any other pupil, gave a different account of the matter;† any change, however, in Chatham's opinion on the subject is almost certainly to be attributed less to a supervening doubt on the political expediency of the step, than to an apprehension that the consequent additions to St. Stephen's might change the constitution of the Assembly, so as to make it unmanageable, or cause, perhaps, a mischievous predominance of the democratic element. The revolutionary movements of 1798, provoking, and aggravated by, French interference, left Chatham's son no alternative but to adopt the plan as the first instalment of a

* Written 1672, Posthumously published 1691.

† See the footnotes on this subject, Lecky, Vol. VIII., p. 271.

conciliatory policy, which was to identify the two countries; the prosperity, secured by means of commercial expansion and the creation of lucrative employment by the younger Pitt, enabled him to rely on the undivided support of the middle classes in England in any proposal he might choose to make. As for Ireland, the creation of fresh peerages in the families of necessary men, together with the costly compensation of Irish borough-mongers, as well as universal corruption of a more direct and material kind, removed all the obstacles of the other side of the Channel. On June 10th, 1800, the Irish House, meeting on College Green for the last time, came to the order of the day for the third reading of the Bill for the Legislative Union, moved by Lord Castlereagh. Amid profound, painful, and even tearful emotion on all sides, the Irish Speaker, Foster, a patriotic and convinced opponent of the Bill, the expression of his countenance visibly reflecting the death throes of the expiring Assembly, not without a visibly supreme effort put it to vote with the usual formula, only uttered after some moments of agonised struggle against his feelings; the "Ayes" unmistakably had it. No division was called for; with an indignant groan, such as might have burst from an Homeric hero, Foster flung the Bill upon the table and sank back into his chair in a state of disgusted exhausion; it was the inevitable reaction after a prolonged period of excruciating strain, accompanied by the misgivings of despair, which had expressed themselves in many doleful prognostications of impending doom; in both countries prevailed the feeling that what men were now called upon to pass through was less an organic change of constitution than a slow convulsion of nature, shaking not merely two kingdoms to their base, but very possibly the whole Western world as well. The popular Assembly in Dublin had contained three hundred members, fifty of whom were lawyers; the total of compensation paid to the Irish owners of rotten

boroughs amounted to £1,260,000, being an average of £15,000 to each borough-monger. Additional bribes were given in the shape of twenty-two Irish peerages, freshly created, of nineteen titular Irish promotions and the conversion of five Irish into English peerages; on the part of the Opposition, the corruption had been nearly as great; single votes on either side had fetched £50,000; nominally, indeed, the Irish Parliament had been a dependent Legislature, but since 1782 the Royal assent had never been asked for in vain; every variety of interest, of intelligence, of property, had been represented in the College Green Assembly; the Irish electors had thus, in some degree, been able to feel themselves an essential part of the machinery of the State; how, it was asked by speaker after speaker, could the Westminster Parliament prove an effective substitute, or how, if the experiment failed, could there be any guarantee against a discontented and unguided Ireland becoming, in the English-speaking world, the same source and centre of aggressive Jacobitism, which France had supplied on the Continent? Among the smaller incidents of the legislative operation were duels between the champions on either side; Corry and Grattan had exchanged shots; an encounter had seemed imminent between Sir John Parnell and Lord Castlereagh, who borne the burden of the ministerial defence.

All, however, was now irrevocably settled by the collective wisdom of the two countries in their respective Legislatures. One State, one Legislature, one Church, were the chief points which Castlereagh had mentioned as to be really and permanently secured by the Union; in the Upper House at Westminster Ireland was to be represented by four bishops, sitting in rotation, and by twenty-eight life Peers; to the Lower she was to send sixty-four shire knights and thirty-six representatives of boroughs and towns, including among them one member for Dublin University. Such had been

Castlereagh's views; Pitt, when mentioning the Irish representation at St. Stephen's, had anticipated the measure, so completely identifying the two countries, as to render it of little consequence in what proportion the two parts of the Empire were represented; said Lord Hawkesbury, "Only let this Union take place, all Irish Party will be extinguished, there will be no parties but those of the British Empire." Of English speakers against the Union, the most formidable was Grey; by an analysis of the facts and figures concerning the alleged supporters of the measure in Ireland, he showed the approval of those about to be fully represented at Westminster to be exaggerated; his chief reason, however, against it was his argument that the new Irish members would be the supporters, the creatures, and the tools of the English Government of the day; to counteract this he proposed that the Irish representation should be reduced to eighty-five, and that the English representation should be popularised by certain electoral reforms, including the disfranchisement of some forty decayed boroughs. Pitt's great friend, William Wilberforce, his supporter on the general principle of the measure, added his own milder protest to Grey's; Pitt himself practically confessed the misgivings to be far from baseless by introducing in committee a clause which limited the Irish placemen in the House to twenty. The historical result has largely falsified both sets of apprehension; instead of proving the subservient tools of any Government of the day, the Irish members at St. Stephen's have rather shown themselves consistent agents in the promotion of democratic progress; it was the Irish vote which Pitt created that turned the parliamentary balance decisively in favour of the Reform Bill of 1832.

No one, it has been said, who was not really a first-rate man, ever secured a seat in an English Cabinet or led the House of Commons. The exception to the rule has been found by

some in the Irishman who took a prominent part in the transactions just described, and who, having meanwhile found a seat in the Administration, was shortly afterwards to lead the Assembly at St. Stephen's. The eldest son of an Ulster landlord, raised to the peerage by Pitt, Robert Stewart Viscount Castlereagh had been born in 1769—the year following Chatham's retirement, the year, in which the Wilkes agitation reached its height, and in which the first of the letters of "Junius" appeared; he, therefore, inhaled with his earliest breath the atmosphere of a stormy time; as a boy, he showed the physical courage of Nelson, the political instinct and parliamentary taste of Pitt; educated first at Armagh, afterwards at St. John's, Cambridge, he carried away from both these seats of learning a smattering of many things, but little or no exact knowledge, and the confirmation of a constitutional tendency to inaccuracy; he was barely of age when, at a cost of £30,000,* his father, in the Irish Parliament, bought him a seat for the county of Down; early associations conspired with the influences of the age to make him an advanced Whig—the associate of the United Irishmen and perhaps himself a member of a Belfast branch of that body; he soon confessed the spell of Pitt's contagious genius; in 1795, he became a declared Tory, held office as Keeper of the Privy Seal, but let it be known that he entirely sympathised with Pitt's projects for Catholic emancipation; at St. Stephen's as yet, Pitt's pet pupil from Ireland was little known except as having been chosen by his chief to second the Address, and as combining a lofty, even a splendidly handsome, presence with unfailing presence of mind with a pervading want of exact knowledge, and with an oratory, whose phraseological terms were inelegant when they were not positively ridiculous;† his most

* Another account fixes it at £60,000.

† The story, never contradicted, is that either now or later Castlereagh continued to conclude a peroration, meant to be eloquent, with the bold monosyllable "Its."

amiable qualities in private life, and some of the most attractive of his political enthusiasms, were transmitted to his nineteenth century descendants, Lord Randolph Churchill and Lord Londonderry.

This is not the place for enumerating any of the improvements in detail, effected by the political change, conceived by the genius of Pitt, and carried out by the tactful industry of Castlereagh; the jobbing in Government patronage, and the corrupt distribution of titles, ended with the College Green Assembly; the Irish Constables Act of 1822, and above all the organization by the Irish Secretary, Thomas Drummond, of the Irish Constabulary, were consequences that went far to justify the questionable means, used to produce them. In the present connection, the chief result was the promotion to an unexpected dignity of a private member at St. Stephen's after the King's indignant refusal of Pitt's Catholic emancipation projects had caused the minister to resign. Henry Addington, the son of a physician and lunacy specialist, whose practice realised him a fortune of £109,000, had, from boyhood, been intimate with the Chatham family; Anthony Addington, the father, who had felt the pulse and inspected the tongue of the mighty Chatham himself, had confirmed the younger Pitt's anticipation of the King's recovery from his madness; the son inherited at least the medical manner of the father; he also, with his white neck-cloth and "customary suit of solemn black," dressed the part; thus, he received the House of Commons nick-name of "the Doctor"; so, in the nineteenth century, one of Henry Addington's party successors was called "the Goat," and an ex-Secretary of State received the name of a famous elephant. Addington had been sent to St. Stephen's by Devizes in 1784 to support Pitt in his war with the Fox and North coalition; his chief's good offices secured him the Speakership in 1789, together with his re-election to the Chair in 1790, 1796, 1801. The *Médecin molgré lui, to*

use another of his nick-names, at first showed the imperturtable good humour and ready wit of North himself, between whose career and his own, were one or two slight coincidences; * Addington could afford to be laughed at because the laugh was generally on his own side; he was a really good man of business with a knack of making himself indispensable; hence, Sheridan's criticism that he resembled the small-pox; every minister must have him once.

Canning, to whom the reader has already been introduced, Castlereagh's most formidable rival, apart from his personal fascination, is the most brilliant illustration of the political system, under which were administered the national affairs before the House of Commons had become in the modern sense representative, before even public opinion had been popularly organised. The House, like the nation, was controlled by groups and factions, which had their mouth-pieces in the leading statesmen on either side; these parliamentary chiefs gave seats to promising recruits in the same way that the Sovereign bestowed army commissions upon well-introduced aspirants to military fame. Till a much later date, the eyes of the great party leaders at Westminster were popularly supposed anxiously to be fixed on the Oxford and Cambridge Unions—even on the less famous debating societies of London—that they might miss no clever young man, qualified to serve them in the House. In the age of Canning, this was not a delusion, but a fact; there were generally some thirty or forty close boroughs at the disposal of the minister, actual or potential; a large number of clever lads by school or college training, associated with political families even if not belonging to them, looked to the House for a professional career as they might look to the Bar; to that class might have

* Thus on coalescing with Fox under Portland, North, an ex-premier, took the Home Secretaryship; Addington did exactly the same thing in the Liverpool Government of 1815.

been referred both the Pitts; its most typical and attractive instance was the distinguished young Etonian, recently called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, who had made such sport of Addington, and had already immortalised himself as a writer of political pasquinades and jeux d'esprit; Canning, though at home bred a Whig, had, as we have seen, allowed himself to be made a Tory proselyte; Pitt heard of his fame, sent for him, and offered him a seat at St. Stephen's. Though Canning surprisingly improved himself after his by no means brilliant debut on the Sardinian subsidy, he retained throughout the oratorical style, with which he had commenced; the chief parliamentary service he rendered Pitt was in defending his patron's friend, Dundas, when, as Lord Melville, impeached for malversation. The most prominent features of Canning's oratory were to some extent reproduced from the Tory minister and from the most sparkling debater of the Whigs; Pitt could often be redundant and prolix, as well as majestic; Fox would have wearied a twentieth century Assembly by his frequently inordinate repetitions. Canning undoubtedly did not escape both of these defects; the monotony and languor, which often marked his flow of words, were, however, counteracted by the sustained polish of his periods, as well as by a rapidity of utterance never attempted by Pitt; at first, this swiftness of speech seemed somewhat strained; gradually it became more natural, artistic, and highly successful; as for wit and humour, these qualities appeared at their best in his admirable impromptu verses, in his prose caricatures, notably that of Erskine in the *Anti-Jacobin*, rather than within the walls of Westminster. In one essential for the highest success at St. Stephen's, Canning fell signally short of his master and model, Pitt, and of his first successor, at all equal to himself in genius, Benjamin Disraeli. At the great crisis of his course, Canning's patience and self-control entirely broke down; he showed a want of judgment,

almost equal to that which had ruined Fox. The Duke of Portland laid down the Premiership and died soon after in 1809; his two lieutenants in the Lower House had been Spencer Perceval and Canning; of these two, the former, a lawyer of professional respectability rather than distinction, had been Attorney-General and was a thoroughly capable member of Parliament; great views were not natural to Perceval, whose excellences as an advocate explains his defects as a statesman; Canning, after Portland's withdrawal, had hoped his rival would have consented as Lord Chancellor to be "kicked up stairs," thus leaving the Premiership and the lead of the Commons to himself; on the failure of that scheme, he resigned and remained outside politics for some time, leaving the first place to Perceval; he thus missed his great chance; for had he accepted Perceval, he would inevitably, on that minister's assassination three years later, have stepped into his place. But though he could not emulate the patience of Pitt, he showed fidelity to that statesman's principles in influencing by his speeches the House of Commons to vote upon George III.'s permanent incapacity for reigning, the constitutional policy, based upon the fact that, apart from the sanction of Parliament, the heir-apparent had no more even of temporary right to the vacant Throne than any other individual. But George III.'s recovery was now past praying for; Canning, therefore, in a memorable piece of rhetoric, argued that the limitations on the Regent's power, originally insisted on by Pitt, were out of place now. Perceval held a different view; but in the final division, the ministerial majority had sunk to twenty-four (224 to 200), the preceding debate had been signalised by the appearance in it of a new and typical member of the old Whig school—the future Prime Minister of the Victorian age, Lord Melbourne; William Lamb, the son of Sir Peniston Lamb, by his marriage with Miss Milbanke, afterwards created Viscount Melbourne,

had entered the House by purchase as member for Leominster, in 1805; he had already spoken against sinecures, as giving Government a venal support, and furnishing a motive for factious opposition with deliberate obstruction and waste of parliamentary time; he was now in the prime of a remarkably patrician and handsome manhood; proud of his well-cut features, he waved his white hand with historic but natural grace; his countenance beamed with animation and intelligence; his hair was so cut as to give him the expression of a high-bred lion when he looked his opponents full in the face; others saw in his demeanour the grace of another Paris; in his spirited remarks, he made common cause with Canning; admitting the parliamentary right by Bill to invest the Prince with Sovereignty, he modernised the remarks of Fox a few years earlier on the inherent claims of the King's eldest son; therefore, he was against all Perceval's restrictions.* William Lamb's fervid rhetoric flowed from him like a stream of fire; he forgot his habitual impassivity in the excitement of the onset; soon, however, the fury had spent itself; he hummed, hawed, and stammered with the air of one, who was bored by, rather ashamed of, his emotion, and relapsed into his cheery, cynical indifference; it was apropos of Canning's speech in this debate that Lamb remarked "it was good, but the best thing ever said by Canning was, as he spat out the wine from his mouth, 'the man who says he likes dry champagne, will say anything.'"

It is time to turn from the Tory champions to the more prominent figure on the same side as William Lamb. The titular leader of the Opposition had been a son of a former speaker of the Irish Parliament, George Ponsonby, Lord Bess-

* Thomas Moore's, now perhaps almost forgotten, epigram remains the best summary of the Whig and Canning views—

> "A strait waistcoat on him, and restrictions on me,
> A more limited monarchy cannot well be."

borough's grandson; he had been introduced to official life by Lord Rockingham; when the Tories came in, he had retired in a fit of vexation to the Irish parliament; here he joined the Opposition under Grattan and Flood; afterwards, in the Talents administration, he had been Irish Lord Chancellor; next he returned to England; the succession of Grey (late Lord Howick) in 1807 to his father's earldom, left the Whigs of the Lower House without a leader; George Tierney, born in 1761, was originally a moderate Pittite rather than a convinced Tory, and afterwards a supporter of Addington; he had, however, joined the Whigs about the same time that Canning and Jenkinson had identified themselves with the other party; the son of a Gibraltar merchant, he had supplemented an Eton and Cambridge training by a thorough study of life and character in the social schools of Europe, especially Paris; in 1788, he fought and won a costly election at Colchester, sitting subsequently at Southwark; with a striking presence and an admirable House of Commons' manner, he combined a ready eloquence, which might have soared, had not the orator, fearless and well-bred in all he did and said, shrunk from the appearance of effort, and preferred to charm the House, as he delighted society, with keen though airy satire, or sparkling persiflage; he was reputed the only man of his time, who ever addressed the Assembly in a lounging posture with his hands in his pockets; he might have filled the vacancy now created, but for the Whig jealousy of men, who, not being territorial squires, could not boast as much as cousinship to a Peer; the deficiency was not compensated by the fact that his refusal, as the spokesman on his side, to abstain at the critical moment in the debate of May 25th, 1798, from censuring Pitt's naval measures, had ended in his confronting the minister's pistol-fire at twelve paces; the succession to Grey was, therefore, reserved for Ponsonby *;

* Eventually the nominal leadership came to Tierney, who outlived his rivals.

among Ponsonby's supporters, the chief were Francis Horner, brought into the House by Lord Henry Petty for one of Lord Kinnaird's boroughs, St. Ives—one of the pioneers of philosophic Radicalism at Westminster, a good debater, a sound economist, whose work, amid the respectable, was to infuse the Liberal leaven into the hard, exclusive mass of aristocratic Whiggism—Brougham, Romilly, and Whitbread; Brougham, by his ambitions and achievements, belongs to the history of the universe, rather than of St. Stephen's; the astonishing union of physical and mental strength which, during the Yorkshire election, enabled him to pass his days, from nine till four, conducting cases in court, his evenings, from four till twelve, in canvassing the county, what remained of his nights in mastering his legal briefs for the morrow; the stupendous versatility of intellect, that was equal to discussing foreign policy with Canning, to arguing legal points with Lyndhurst, to rivalling Whewell in mathematics and philosophy, Hallam in the writing of history, and Herschel in the knowledge of the heavenly bodies—all this made him a prodigy of the age, only less great in reality than he seemed to his own diseased egotism. Henry Brougham, having long before that achieved fame at the Bar, when his youth had now passed, entered the House as member for the pocket-borough of Camelford in 1810; he kept a vow not to speak till he had been a month in the place, and on March 5th he was first heard in the debate originated by Whitbread's censure motion on Lord Chatham's generalship in the Low Countries; after that he seldom missed a debate; he never attended one in which he did not take part; his famous collision with Canning occurred April 17th, 1823, in the discussion on Catholic emancipation; Brougham had charged Canning with "monstrous truckling, unprecedented in the whole history of political tergiversation" for joining the Cabinet, which dealt with Catholic relief as an open question

—a Cabinet which resembled the keys of a harpsichord, one black and one white down the whole line; Sir Francis Burdett had sneered at the whole farce the subject constituted. Canning, in reply, dwelt on the impossibility of a Government that should be unanimous in the matter, flatly contradicted words attributed by Burdett to himself, adding that every word uttered by Brougham was false; a dead silence followed; as Canning refused to withdraw the words, a private member, Bankes, moved the committal of the two disputants to the Serjeant-at-Arms; an independent member adroitly suggested an honourable composition of the wrangle; it was plain, said Sir R. Wilson, that Brougham's charge against Mr. Secretary Canning applied to him only in his official capacity; the House accepted the explanation, and the matter was allowed to drop. Shortly after this, the whole incident being fresh in parliamentary remembrance, Charles Dickens entered the Reporters' Gallery; there he witnessed the scene which had occurred April 17th, 1823; in the first chapter of *Pickwick* he gave his humorous paraphrase of it, in a description of the quarrel between Mr. Blotton and Mr. Pickwick which disturbed the Pickwick Club, but which was, happily, composed by the explanation of the offensive words having been employed only in a Pickwickian sense.

Among the Irish members to whom the Union Act had given places at St. Stephen's was one remarkable for his high and lofty brow, always serene, generally inscrutable, and for the most part bent downwards; if his country and its rights were attacked, he kept his habitual silence, nor even curled his lips in scornful dissent; if they were defended, he gave no sign of approval; none the less was he consumed by an inward fire, which was forging steel links of argument, that would presently bind the attention of the House as by a chain, which could not be shaken off; in figure, Plunket was not commanding; his features had no

special grace. None the less the presence of the man seemed to fill and awe the Assembly; his oratorical manner lacked the vivacity of the Celt; but, as he looked round, first in this direction then in that, the deep-drawn voice, slow and quiet, was occasionally emphasized by arms and hands of extraordinary strength, lifted above his head; all the energies of a still strong nature were infused into the close, clear argument; from exordium to peroration, Plunket held the House by sheer force of moral earnestness and intellectual power.

Before this episode could have been forgotten, while Brougham and Burdett, separated by many differences, were united for action on the Catholic question, Plunket brought forward his annual emancipation proposal in a short speech, and in a House suffering from the reaction after the excitement already described; in several divisions it was negatived by a majority of almost three to one, so that Freemantle could write to the Duke of Buckingham, "Our Catholic question has gone to the Devil."

Before pursuing the fate of the question in the House, other Catholic champions in it than those already mentioned should be glanced at. In the last half of the eighteenth century the Recorder of Dublin had disinherited his son, then a student at Trinity College, for having become a convert to the reformer, Henry Flood; the young man went to London, entered the Middle Temple, thought less of the Bar than of St. Stephen's; during his holidays he rehearsed oratorical effects in Windsor Forest, just as Demosthenes had perfected his speech on the sea-shore; his landlady overheard him addressing a visionary "Mr. Speaker"; she felt sure he had lost his wits, because no person said a word in the house except himself; at Westminster he sat successively for Malton, in Yorkshire, and for Dublin; he won many recruits, not only to the Catholic cause, but to that of Irish autonomy, first opened in 1782, and involving the repeal of the Statute

of George I., which formed the most recent obstacle in its way; on this occasion (April, 1782), Grattan being in wretched health, displayed more than the habitual hesitation, which marked the opening of his speeches; "the contortions of the Sibyl without the inspiration" was the expression applied to Grattan's physical peculiarities of manner; now the gestures and body-twistings, the grotesque swinging of the arms, and drawl of the voice were even unusually marked, but after the first five minutes he commanded the attention of the House and kept it till he sat down. Grattan's chief English ally in his patriotic struggle for Ireland had been the same Yorkshire baronet, Sir George Savile, of old descent and of many acres, who had co-operated with Burke and Dunning in their attempts to curb the increased and increasing power of the Crown; Grattan had secured a free Parliament for his country; he now became instrumental in obtaining many reliefs for its Church.

Grattan's great Catholic campaign commenced in the session of 1813, with a motion to go into committee for considering the subject; he carried his proposal by two hundred and sixty-four votes to two hundred and twenty-four; the Bill to give effect to it was supported by Canning with a few amendments. The century had opened with Mitford, afterwards Lord Redesdale and Irish Chancellor, a stately incarnation of reactionary Toryism, in the Chair of the House. His successor was Charles Abbot, subsequently Lord Colchester; notwithstanding an occasionally exaggerated sense of his own dignity and of the privileges of the House, Abbot made an impartial, as well as an imposing, chairman; intensely Conservative, he was instrumental, in 1813, in carrying, by two hundred and fifty-one to two hundred and forty-seven, the amendment which, by excluding Catholics from Parliament, frustrated the object of Grattan's Relief Bill. Of Speaker Abbot two other personal

details may be given. He had shown his impartiality in the debate of April, 1805, by giving his casting vote for the impeachment of Lord Melville *—the friend of the Tory minister with whom all Abbot's sympathies went; for ten minutes he had been sitting, pale as death, silent in the Chair; he turned his eyes from Pitt's appealing glance; as he stepped down and up in the "Aye" lobby, he could not help seeing the tears which poured down the Premier's face, to conceal which, Pitt had crushed his hat over his brows. The figures in the first division had been two hundred and sixteen on either side; Abbot's decision turned the balance; Melville was a ruined, Pitt a doomed, man, soon to receive his death-blow in the news of Austerlitz.

The irregular progress of the Catholic Relief movement from Grattan's motion in 1813; the reaction that next year set in against it; the unpopularity of the Relief policy throughout the country; its obstinate resistance by the Crown; the reluctant conversion by Canning of the official Toryism, represented by John Wilson Croker—these things belong to the general story of the century; they ended in Canning's posthumous triumph on March 6th, 1829. The future Sir Robert Peel, as the Duke of Wellington's Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the Commons, amid cheers, which penetrated through the lobby passages into Westminster Hall, spoke for four hours in favour of the Emancipation Bill; he had been known to regard it as inevitable even in Lord Liverpool's time, he had declared himself in its favour when, in 1825, Sir Francis Burdett moved the third reading—to be rejected by the Lords; during the debates of 1829, Sir George Murray, alone among the Duke's

* It has been pointed out by anonymous authority that the Speaker's casting vote, 1805, was not given on the actual motion for impeaching Lord Melville, but on the earlier consideration of the question whether the charges against him should be referred to a Select Committee, or dealt with by the House then and there.

adherents, supported his lieutenant in the Lower House; hitherto Murray had contrived to be absent when the matter came on, he had now made up his mind to swim with the tide; on the second night Sir Thomas Lethbridge, Sir Hussey Vivian, both typical specimens of Tory county members, declared for the measure. Sotheron Estcourt, Jonathan Peel, a favourite speaker on Tory platforms, named Moore, an Orange oratorical hack, Hart Davis, all delivered farewell shots against the Bill; Wetherell, a violent and eccentric Protestant, was Attorney-General; he took this opportunity of proclaiming his retirement and vituperating his leaders—the respectable old Protestant firm of Peel and Co. is, he said, broken up; it was a remarkable display, generally explained by the fact that Wetherell had dined too well, and that, as the Speaker put it, he had only one lucid interval—that between his waistcoat and his breeches; for, to gesticulate with greater ease, he unbuttoned his braces; his trousers fell down, his waistcoat ran up, thus displaying an interspace of white linen; hitherto the proposal had been rejected at St. Stephen's by majorities, which had at last dwindled down to two. Now, with nearly two hundred votes to spare, the Catholic subjects of the realm gained full equality with their Protestant fellow-citizens.

# CHAPTER XIV.

## THE MAKING OF A REPRESENTATIVE HOUSE.

Sir Francis Burdett—Biographical notice—A supporter of reform—Besieged in his house in Piccadilly—Debate concerning the Manchester riots—Brougham's, Sir J. Mackintosh's, Plunket's, Burdett's speeches—Lord John Russell—His speaking—A supporter of Burdett's reform motion—Moves the disfranchisement of notoriously corrupt boroughs—The motion lost—Increasing adherents to Russell—Sir Thomas Lethbridge—Lord Cochrane—Russell's motion, for enquiry as to number of electors, defeated—Carries a motion against bribery by the Speaker's casting vote—Changes in the Tory party—Reformers of all kinds in the House—Romilly, Mackintosh, &c.—Sir James Graham—Joseph Hume—The Marquis of Blandford a supporter of reform—Supported in his schemes by Lord John Russell—Opposed by Lord Stanley, the future Lord Derby—Lord Russell's proposal for enfranchising Leeds rejected—Growing feeling in the country against the privileged classes—The feeling helped on by the Press—Loss of seats to the great Whigs—Sir Henry Parnell's Civil List motion—Influence of the Press on Parliament—Lord Althorp—His dislike of office—The eve of Russell's Reform proposals—Surprise created by them—Tory factions unite to oppose it—Russell supported by the country—Speakers for and against Russell's Reform Bill—Gascoyne's amendment—Speakers on the amendment, Thomas Babington Macaulay and others—Sir Robert Peel—Sir Richard Vyvyan—Diminishing power of the great borough-mongers—Reform Bill re-introduced—The Reform Bill carried—Prosecution of Cobbett—The Second and Third Reform Bills passed by the Commons.

"SWEET and silvery as Belial himself, the greatest favourite in Pandemonium, too rich to bribe and much too proud for power, and as to fear a *fico* for the Tower"—such was the impression left upon two poets who knew him—Byron and Bulwer—by the tall athletic presence of Sir Francis Burdett; eventually he was to become a proselyte to the highest

Toryism, and the doctrine of the irresponsibility of the King's ministers to the people;* Burdett, after a Westminster and Oxford education, and a marriage which made him one of the richest men in England, had, in 1796, entered St. Stephen's as member for Boroughbridge; he had supported the parliamentary reform projects of the second Pitt; he had made his maiden speech as seconder of a motion brought forward by Fox; his angry and eloquent denunciations of the arbitrary imprisonment of political agitators by Castlereagh and Sidmouth, or when the French Revolution had driven him into Toryism, by the second Pitt, first made Burdett a popular idol. In 1797 Burke had died; the Whig sections had reunited themselves upon the platform of electoral reform under Grey, then sitting as a Yorkshire member in the Lower House; Burdett supported the new Whig leader's proposal—to increase county representation, equally to redistribute the borough constituencies throughout the United Kingdom, to give the suffrage to all householders, and to make Parliaments triennial; on these proposals the reformers, largely owing to Burdett's efforts, secured the best division they were to have till 1813; before that date there had occurred an incident which, invested with the monarchy of the mob, the patrician Radical, whose personal charm and periods of silvery reassurance half reconciled his fellow-aristocrats to the political doctrines they detested; Gale-Jones, the president of a debating club, had published an account of a discussion, in 1810, on the expedition to the Scheldt; the House summoned Jones to the Bar, and, in its old autocratic spirit, committed him to Newgate. Burdett denied its power to imprison any, save its own members, engaged in a wrangle with the Speaker, which ended in the sentence of himself to the Tower; a cavalry and

* "If," said Burdett, "I engage a butler, who will only take my place if I make Harry my coachman, and Dick my footman, should I not be justly astonished?"

infantry force assisted the Serjeant-at-Arms to enter Burdett's house in Piccadilly, barricaded for a siege; the patriot had an artistic eye for political effect; when his captors broke into his library, they found him teaching his infant son to read Magna Charta; he was borne to his prison amid the enthusiasm of a multitude, lining the streets, and firing pistol-shots, which were followed by disturbance and bloodshed. As a debater, Burdett combined with his perfect delivery a most happy readiness of repartee, admired by no one more than by the fastidious Canning, who, in one of the early Reform debates, defended the existing borough system as a thing which had "Grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength;" in reply, Burdett quoted the preceding line of the couplet—"The young disease, which must subdue at length"; in November, 1819, the Manchester riots gave rise to a debate, of which those who were present said it raised their idea of the capacity of the human mind. The leaders on both sides excelled themselves; Brougham revived the attention of the House, partly exhausted by three tedious speakers who had preceded him, and, after a twelve hours' discussion, kept it on the alert from three to five in the early morning; Sir James Mackintosh astonished it once more with his stores of recondite wisdom; Plunket's reply silenced Mackintosh, amazed and delighted all; Canning poured forth argument, irony, jest, invective declamation in a torrent, that flowed and sparkled for three hours; for practical sense and political shrewdness Burdett's answer formed the most masterly display of the sitting.

"That a change in the constitution of the House of Commons is necessary, the noble lord (Lord John Russell) asserts and I deny, with his talents, he will renew his efforts; his be the triumph to have precipitated those calamities, be mine the consolation that to the utmost and the latest of my power I have opposed them." That was in 1822, April 25th; at that

date, the second Pitt's disciples, led by Canning, had deserted and were all denouncing the electoral ideas of their master. On Lord John Russell had now fallen the mantle of Grey; the third son of the sixth Duke of Bedford, born in 1792, he had been returned for the family borough of Tavistock, represented some hundred and fifty years earlier, by his ancestor, Lord William Russell; as a debater, he soon distanced most of his contemporaries; but in an age and in a House appreciative of good rhetoric, he lacked the bright imagination and literary finish of Canning, the stateliness of Peel; early in the Victorian era the Duke of Wellington could speak of Lord John as a host in himself; his weak physique and abstracted manner caused his recognition as a leader to be very gradual; as often as he rose to speak, it was not till he had advanced some way, till the steam was fairly on, that his words came out freely, forcibly, that the diminutive presence seemed to dilate with the fervour of his theme; then languid Johnny glowed to glorious John, the born leader of men stood forth in full relief; in 1819 he emphasized his position by supporting Burdett's Reform motion, advocated the disfranchisement of notoriously corrupt boroughs, as well as shorter Parliaments, but he stigmatised as wild and visionary Burdett's projects of annual or triennial Parliaments, as well as of universal or even household suffrage; four days later he moved the disfranchisement of places so infamously venal as Grampound, Camelford, Barnstaple, and Penryn; meanwhile the country remained indifferent to reform; the House resented, as a libel on itself, Burdett's statements of its representative worthlessness; it went, like the country, with Canning; Russell's motion was lost by two hundred and sixty-nine to one hundred and sixty-four; even thus, the Reform party had shown to more advantage than on any occasion since the early days of Pitt; Russell and his friends were, however, slowly gaining adherents on the other side; Sir Thomas Lethbridge,

remarkable for his tall, handsome figure, hair more golden and eyes of a brighter blue than is often seen in mature manhood, with one or two other equally strong Tories, supported the motion, which fared, however, less well in the lobby than its predecessor a few years earlier; it was, in fact, lost by two hundred and eighty to one hundred and sixty-nine. About this time a Whig candidate for Honiton borough, entering upon his canvass with some chivalrous ideas of electoral purity, was pained to hear from one of his electors that, whatever the party, he always voted for Mr. Most; the candidate, the brave and scientific seaman, Lord Cochrane, afterwards Lord Dundonald, subsequently expelled from the House on the charge of Stock Exchange gambling, had been Burdett's chief ally throughout his Reform campaign. Cochrane, however, was now either fighting across the Atlantic for Brazil or preparing to become the champion of Greece; Burdett himself found he could serve the cause outside Parliament as well as in it; the chief work at St. Stephen's fell upon Russell; he did, however, nothing fresh till 1823, when Canning, by one hundred and twenty-eight to ninety, defeated his motion for inquiry into the number of voters in each constituency; again beaten, by two hundred and forty-seven to one hundred and twenty-three, on a Reform proposal in 1826, he bided his opportunity a little later; the result of his resolution against bribery was a tie (sixty-two votes on either side). Charles Manners Sutton filled the Chair from 1817 to 1835 with equal, and, for the most part, unjust dissatisfaction to Whigs and Tories; Lord Grey hereafter was to refuse him the usual Peerage on his retirement on the plea that the Opposition in the Upper House must not be recruited by so much ability; Canning, when Premier, had offered him the Home Secretaryship, with the nomination of the Irish Viceroy; in 1826 Sutton further alienated the already distrustful Tories by giving the "Ayes" his casting vote on

Russell's bribery motion, which was thus carried in this unusual way.

Meanwhile, the political complexion of the House and of the Toryism represented in the Government, had been undergoing a change, that was the prognostic of Liberal progress in Church and State; Canning was in closer sympathy than Castlereagh with the spirit of the time; at the Home Office Peel showed more enlightenment than Sidmouth; the substitution of "Prosperity" Robinson for Vansittart at the Exchequer betokened a change of measures, not less than of men. The philanthropic leaven first infused by Burke and Wilberforce had been steadily working; if Mackintosh took parliamentary rank from his abilities, Samuel Romilly's position in the House was a tribute to the force of character, as, indeed, had been remarked by Mackintosh himself; the first Criminal Law reformer who had sat at St. Stephen's for more than half a century, Romilly, in 1808, had secured the abolition of the death penalty for pocket-picking; Romilly's and Mackintosh's humane influence thereafter made itself felt at the Home Office; Huskisson's advances to Free Trade became precedent at the Exchequer. No party pledged to parliamentary reform; no organization for securing it yet existed; no national resolution in its favour had been unanimously taken. Other champions of Reform than Russell were appearing at St. Stephen's; Sir James Graham, mild of manner, commanding in figure, handsome and intellectual in countenance, seemed, from his languid tones when he first rose to speak, a drawing-room dandy, who had fallen a victim to a superb boredom; presently, however, he showed himself as spirited, powerful, and remorseless in parliamentary attack as had been any of his Cumbrian ancestors in their border forays; his colleague, in finding out and hunting down corruption of all kinds, presented a striking personal contrast to himself—Joseph Hume, a Scotch member, of middle height,

sandy complexion, drab-coloured hair, and a face which, if it could be called plebeian, showed also extraordinary power and determination; he had for years employed a staff of clerks and arithmetical experts in detecting blunders in the national book-keeping and waste of the national money; he spoke with a broad Scotch accent, but his analysis of what he called the "tottles" of State expenditure had grown into a ministerial terror. Another agent of Reform was supplied by the family which John Churchill, the conqueror of Blenheim, had founded; the Duke of Newcastle, with the famous exclamation, "Can I not do what I will with my own?" had just ejected his tenants who had voted against him in the Newark election; the Marquis of Blandford, the Duke of Marlborough's eldest son, in the session of 1830, made a spirited attack on Peel's seeming justification of the Duke's question, and proposed a standing committee for the disfranchisement of decayed or corrupt boroughs, the abolition of the property qualification, the admission of clergymen as M.Ps., the exclusion of placemen, the adoption of household suffrage, and the payment of borough members at £2 a day, of county members of £4. Lord John Russell and his friends supported the scheme; it was condemned by a future member of the Grey Reform Administration; this was the then member for Stockbridge, Edward Geoffrey Smith Stanley, who, as fourteenth Lord Derby, became the Conservative Premier of Queen Victoria; to the last he combined with the eagle features, that reminded many of Chatham, the keen flashing eye, that acted as a spell upon those on whom it was fixed, with voice of silvery clearness and the mastery of phrase, that made him as an orator the one match for Daniel O'Connell; to educate Ireland and to abolish West Indian slavery were his two great achievements; the first of these he was meditating when, as chief secretary to the Irish Viceroy, he became one of the Reform minister's lieutenants in the Lower House.

In the February of 1830 the Houses met to reject, by one hundred and eighty-eight to one hundred and forty, Lord John Russell's proposal for enfranchising Leeds, Birmingham, and Manchester. On June 26th George IV. died; within a month came the dissolution; in the November of the same year the new Parliament met. The privileged classes had long felt themselves on the brink of a volcano, whose eruption might at any moment oppress or entirely overwhelm them. Education and reading had been pushed too far among the lower classes;* the pamphlets, written by gentlemen of leisure, for or against eminent individuals, or aristocratic cliques in politics, had given place to a popular Press, which, no longer content with chronicling small beer and social events from day to day, dared to have political opinions of their own, and to expound them to the masses, whom they presumed to instruct in politics. The political journalism that was now becoming a power owed more to Joseph Hume than to any other single man in or out of the House of Commons. To the newspapers of his choice he communicated the facts and figures, incriminating official Whiggism or Toryism that he had unearthed; the tranquillity with which, in 1830, the Bourbons were dislodged from the French throne reassured the middle classes, who now combined with the multitude in the demand for a really representative House of Commons. The first General Elections under William IV., out of twenty-eight members returned by the most popular constituencies then existing, gave the Duke of Wellington but three supporters; Joseph Hume distanced all competitors in Middlesex; Brougham was returned at the head of the poll for Yorkshire; the county where the Tory influence of the Dukes of Rutland had hitherto been unchallenged, showed itself not less staunchly Whig than the traditionally aristocratic Devonshire. The Duke of Wellington only a year ago had thought

* *Quarterly Review*, Vol. XXXIX., p. 494.

to win popularity by accepting the Catholic Relief measure, which Canning had pressed upon him in vain; he now found himself to have alienated the Tories without conciliating the Nonconformists; for Dublin University the seat had been lost by John Wilson Croker, a too fluent and facile speaker perhaps, but, as will presently be seen, an effective and brilliant master of parliamentary fence. Such was what, in the words of the taunt that gave its title to Brougham's pamphlet, the duke had "gained by the dissolution"; yet, amid the multiplying signs of middle class discontent and of industrial despair, the Prime Minister at the opening of the session, in reply to Lord Grey's appeal for political concessions, declared not only that he was unprepared to bring forward any measure of reform, but that he would resist to the last any such project when proposed by others; the duke went on practically to echo the opinion of his former colleague, Canning, in describing the present Legislature as, for all purposes of legislation, practically perfect. The reformers in the House of Commons were not slow to take up the challenge or the defiance thus thrown down; a few days later (November 15th, 1830) Sir Henry Parnell's Civil List motion gave the reforming Opposition in the Commons a majority of twenty-nine (233 to 204); out of the old Whig nucleus, combined with the independent Canningites and Grenvilleites, Lord Grey, having been sent for by William IV., at once formed a Cabinet pledged to parliamentary reform; now, in a way never before witnessed, the Press began to influence Parliament; the support of the *Times* was of immense help to the reformers; the newspaper showed its impartiality by advocating the retention of Lyndhurst in the Lord Chancellorship; it caused some delay in the eventual nomination of Brougham; this last would have more than justified his appointment afterwards, had he done nothing more than invent the cry "The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill," which

raised the country and checked the introduction of destructive amendments in the House. The death of Huskisson on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway on the previous September 15th, prevented the inclusion in the Government of the earliest nineteenth century pioneer of Liberal progress. Lord Grey's Chancellor of the Exchequer and lieutenant in the Lower House was Lord Althorp, heir to the Spencer earldom, a typical country gentleman as, on a smaller scale, had been Pym himself, of ability equal to ordinary affairs, of a conscientious industry that could not be tired, and regarded at St. Stephen's with extraordinary confidence and respect on both sides; Grey, indeed, had wished Althorp, as sitting in the Commons, to be at the head of affairs; the reply to that offer was an absolute refusal of the first place, and only on the assurance that, without him, the Reform project must drop, an acceptance of the second command; Althorp, indeed, was renowned for a loathing of office of all kinds, surprising in a man so able and so absolutely unaffected; in Downing Street he never rose in the morning without hoping to be dead before night; but without him the Bill would never have gone through; his knowledge of all its details and of every matter connected with it seemed almost supernatural to his colleagues, who, without him, would have been more than once decisively discomfited by the consummately clever and persistent attacks of men like John Wilson Croker; as it was, one of the most formidable of these assaults Althorp triumphantly parried by the simple interposition of his personal credit. Croker had most ably rallied the Opposition against the Government by "diabolically awkward" criticisms, as they were called; Althorp, rising to reply, found he had mislaid some calculations he had made, which he thought disposed of the objections, and merely said he thought the House would be well advised to reject the amendment; this it immediately did. Once only was he absent for a few

hours from one of the later discussions; that was to see a prize-fight; those manly encounters it was a point of conscience with him never to fail publicly to encourage.

In the constitutional struggle which now opened at Westminster, the place of honour at St. Stephen's was, at Althorp's wish, filled by Lord John Russell. The first Cabinet draft of the measure was generally known to have contained the ballot, which, together with certain qualifications for voters, had been ruled out. In the February of 1830, Russell's proposal to enfranchise the great Provincial capitals, mentioned above, had been rejected by one hundred and eighty-eight to one hundred and forty; on March 1st, 1831, with a presentiment of coming victory faintly flushing his pale face, and seeming generally to expand his thin, slight presence, he rose to explain the proposals by which the House of Commons was to complete the foundations of democratic England. During some weeks before, the coming Bill had been heralded by a squadron of petitions, which had filled to overflowing the receptacle for these documents beneath the table of the House; these had even been mentioned in some preliminary discussions. On the memorable kalends that introduced the real debate all the approaches to the House were filled with a crowd denser even than that which, three years earlier, had testified its concern for Catholic emancipation. Quite recently Sir Robert Peel had sneered at the parturient throes and domestic difficulties of the Reform concoctors. Stanley, Grey's Irish secretary, failed to carry his re-election at Preston against "Orator" Hunt; this fact had forced upon the reluctant Whigs the unwelcome conviction of the time for merely palliative measures being past. The Tory, and, indeed, the general expectation of a Bill, containing a few sops for the agitators, some fresh penalties on bribery, the disfranchisement of Gatton, Bramber, Old Sarum, and the compensation of the borough-mongers, was to be dramatically

disappointed. Sixty boroughs disfranchised at a single stroke; half their representation to be taken from forty-seven more—these were only some of the changes flashed upon a dismayed and half-blinded Assembly, with an artistic eye to political effect, by Lord John; noting the sensation produced by one announcement after another, he paused, as if to enable his listeners to recover their senses. Surely, it was thought, the last sentence of doom had been pronounced. But no! Undisturbed by Peel's ironical laughter, calmly and smilingly Lord John continued, as playing with his audience, "more yet." In his opening sentences, Russell had described himself as standing between two hostile parties, not more removed from the bigotry of the one than from the fanaticism of the other; the House, by its applause, had shown its sense of the need of a common feeling between a taxed people and a taxing Assembly; it had, indeed, recognised that no project merely to lop off some excrescences or to remedy a few defects would satisfy an excited and justly discontented country. To the last, however, none were quite prepared for the drastic details of the bold expedient, by which Lord John Russell, as the Whig spokesman, contemplated the restoration of democratic influence in English government. Contrary to the anticipations of the official cliques on either side, the proprietorial principle, vested in Whig and Tory boroughmongers, was really to be eliminated from practical politics; if shorter Parliaments and the ballot were not as yet adopted, if they were now only mentioned by Lord John Russell to be rejected, that was only because they could be dealt with more conveniently in a separate measure.

Differences, arising out of Canning's policy and influence, had divided the Tories into several camps. In the presence of a common and audacious enemy, these schisms were immediately healed; the High Churchmen forgot that, in 1829, they had been betrayed by Wellington; the political high-

fliers feared to remember the desertion which they had been so violently resenting; the revolution with havoc, with red ruin, and the breaking up of laws—all incarnated in the diminutive person of a Whig duke's brother, hounded on by one actual and one potential earl, consolidated the Opposition into one mass. Murray and Wetherell were said not to have spoken for three sessions; they now were fused into unity by the sustained glow of their common indignation, sat on adjoining seats, and shared between them their co-operating votes on Russell's speech. Not far from these sat the present and the future member for Oxford University, Sir Robert Harry Inglis and Sir Robert Peel, hitherto divided by sharp disagreements, now absolutely and belligerently unanimous; to the older baronet a resemblance might perhaps be traced in the Sir William Heathcote of a later day, who once divided with W. E. Gladstone the representation of the same seat of learning. Russell resumed his seat amid cheers; during the intervals of debate, those about him were whispering to each other Tallyrand's recent *mot*, that the Reform Parliament was the convocation of the Estates General, which at Paris had preceded the French Revolution. With some men moral character transmutes itself into parliamentary force; here Inglis was Althorp's equal; in knowledge of the whole Reform question, he was seen to be not Althorp's inferior, when, first among the Tories, he opened fire upon the scheme. Seven nights were occupied with debate, wherein seventy-one speakers took part, before, without a division, at last leave was formally given to bring in the Bill. Three weeks later came the debate on the second reading; the conventional amendment postponing this for six months was moved by a shire knight from the province of an earlier reformer, Sir John Eliot. But in making this motion, Sir R. Vyvyan, member for Bristol, was constrained to acknowledge he did so against the wishes of his county constituency; that he

believed to be the case of very many who, like him, objected to the measure, for Lord John Russell's introductory speech, circulated throughout the kingdom, had undeniably produced a very strong excitement in the Bill's favour. In the same sort of resignedly despairing vein, Villiers Stuart, who sat for one of the doomed boroughs, felt it a point of honour to vote against the Bill, but added a cynical belief that he should be found in the minority; on the other hand, Lord Norreys had come to the House prepared to support ministers, but, having heard Lord John, should go against them; the Solicitor-General had defended the Bill as the one safeguard against, and alternative to, a revolution; Sir Edward Sugden, the profoundest lawyer on the Tory side, closed the first day's debate with the taunt that Whig zeal for reform meant nothing more than tenacity of office. Sir John Shelley, from Devonshire, echoed the tone of his Cornish colleague; he regretfully admitted himself to differ from his constituents, and to have been the only person at a recent meeting in his borough whose voice was raised against reform; to the same effect spoke many others; Lord Mount Charles, an Irish member, sacrificed his conscience to his patriotism in supporting the Bill; Lord Castlereagh placed duty before inclination in resisting it, on the broad ground that, if carried, it would annihilate the principles of birth and race; Sir R. Bateson, a parliamentarian, influential then as many of his descendants have since been in the secret councils of both parties, condemned the Bill on the ground that it would give fresh weight to the aristocracy, but weaken the mercantile, manufacturing, and shipping interests. The strongest and not the least sagacious of independent Tories, Shaw—member for Dublin University—usually cold and monotonous as a speaker, but now as voluble and violent as if the Church and the Orange men, instead of the borough-mongers, were threatened

—appealed to the old Whig reformers he still saw in the House—Coke, of Holkham (Norfolk), Lord George Cavendish, of Derby—to enable him to give to a moderate Bill the support he must certainly withhold from this. The champion of Irish Catholicism and repeal, who owed his seat at St. Stephen's to the policy of Canning, Richard Lalor Sheil, gave a prophecy of his oratorical excellence five years later in a brilliant defence of the reforming Whigs. Undoubtedly during both the first and second reading discussions the tendency was for the Bill to acquire not less of fresh support than it had created of terror; this was noticed in one of the few speeches ever made by a great county member, Sir Thomas Dyke-Acland, who is now remembered chiefly as one of the founders of Grillion's Club; after he had briefly spoken, and "Orator" Hunt, the victor over Stanley at Preston, whose white hat was the earliest badge of Radicalism, as Charles Fox's buff waistcoat and blue coat were the Whig symbols, the House divided; the second reading was carried, March 21st, 1831, by a majority of one (302 to 301).

Bamber Gascoyne, a House of Commons figure, who reminded many of Lord North's ferocious adversary, Colonel Barré, had effectively denounced Shelburne's pensions half a century earlier. It was a Gascoyne now who barred for the present the further progress of the Bill. On April 18th, on the motion to go into committee, General Gascoyne, who had long since shaken off the Liberal enthusiasm with which Catholic emancipation had seemed to inspire him, moved an amendment against any reduction of the numbers at St. Stephen's. The Bill, as originally introduced, was thought too much to favour the agricultural element in the national representation; the measure's declared principle was to increase the members of populous towns and counties; Gascoyne's amendment, by pledging the Government to keep the House at its existing number, placed more seats than had been

asked for at the Ministerial disposal. Grey and his friends were committed, on their own statement of the case, to give the larger constituencies the advantage of such a surplusage; this plausible consistency between the ruling ideas of the framers of the Bill, and the improvement on it, now suggested, prevailed; the net, spread so cleverly, caught votes on every side; Gascoyne was seconded by a Yorkshire member, Mr. Sadler, the statistician, so entertainingly disposed of by Macaulay.* In one of the debates that ensued occurred the rhetorical duel between Macaulay and Croker, who, on this occasion, turned the argument against his adversary with a cleverness worthy of the man who had so terribly lashed his *Boswell* in the *Edinburgh Review;* Macaulay had appealed to the House and the aristocracy to be warned by the fate of the nobility of France, "which refused all concession till the time had arrived when no concession could avail." But, retorted Croker, did the French nobles show a blind and inflexible obstinacy; did they even display the decency of a deliberative body? A Montmorency sacrificed on the altar of his country the privileges of the noblesse. A Noailles proposed the abolition of all feudal rites. We next find the Montmorencies in exile, and a Noailles on the scaffold. Macaulay's Reform speeches, which at once secured him office, bear just the same literary resemblance to his printed essays as, in an earlier House, had been displayed by the harangues of Sir Philip Francis to the Letters of "Junius." The rapidity with which he usually spoke, the lack of variety of intonation, caused his parliamentary success to be less than his superb common sense, his keen and powerful intellect—all expressing themselves in his admirable English—would have seemed to promise. Of the other distinguished, but now scarcely remembered, speakers who took part in the debate raised by the Gascoyne amendment were,

* In the Essay on the Law of Population.

on the Ministerial side, Denman, Sir. James Graham; these were supported by the brother of the novelist, the future Lord Dalling, then Henry Bulwer, who, in the intervals of diplomacy, sat as an advanced Liberal for Coventry, Marylebone, and Wilton; the Ministerialist especially disliked and dreaded by the Tories was Hawkins, member for the disfranchised St. Michael's Mount; his great offence was a powerful argument against an amendment, for which his connection with a menaced borough should have secured his support. Other personal incidents were Stanley's magnificent invectives against the Whig secessionists, led by Sir R. Wilson, and the great position for the first time made for himself by Sir Robert Peel as a Conservative rather than a Tory leader. Peel's so-called Toryism was, indeed, never anything more than an hereditary dislike of aristocratic Whiggism, originally due, not to political but to domestic reasons; the plain yeoman stock from which that statesman sprung had thought itself aggrieved by the oligarchic patricians to which Grey belonged; Peel's manner proved of not less parliamentary use than his dignified and handsome presence; apparently the soul of prim candour and frigid sincerity, he passed for a consummate master of the plausibilities rather than for a born administrator; in his pretentions to Tory leadership he had a most formidable rival in a West of England Celt, a gentleman of middle size, slender, and delicately made, with pensive countenance, sallow complexion, but without the energy and versatility his party needed. This was the already-mentioned Sir Richard Vyvyan, member for Bristol; Vyvyan, as Tory champion, already, when little more than thirty, had raised expectations which, never being quite fulfilled, earned for him the parliamentary nick-name of the "Anticlimax." In the General Election that followed the Ministerial defeat on the Gascoyne amendment, Vyvyan was

among the first opponents of the Bill to lose his seat; Yorkshire, in every riding and town, threw out the Tory candidate; further north the house of Lowther, which from time immemorial had held Westmorland, Cumberland, and Carlisle in its pockets, carried only one of its men; in Nottingham and throughout the Midlands the Napoleon of borough-mongers, the Duke of Newcastle, experienced a succession of Moscows; throughout England the tenant-farmers, as a class compelled to choose between their landlord's nominee and the Whig measure, tearfully yielded to the compulsion of voting for the Bill; the authority, as Warden of the Cinque Ports, of the Duke of Wellington could not secure the return of his nominee, Sir J. Reid, at Dover; in Kent the revolutionary fervour of the fourteenth century burst forth anew; the poll was taken at Maidstone; thither from all parts of the county marched voters the night before, to bivouac in a barn, that their candidate might be put to no expense.

Just two months after their discomfiture by the Gascoyne motion, the reformers reassembled at St. Stephen's absolutely triumphant. The House was still in the ground swell of the excitement which had possessed it upon its dissolution, April 22nd, amid the uproar and haste caused by its determination to stifle Lord Wharncliffe's motion. On June 24th Lord John Russell rose to re-introduce the Bill; his manner now presented a striking contrast to that of his earlier appearance; then his tone had been deprecatory, almost suppliant; to-day he had not only the entire party and House, but the whole country behind him; confidence and authority were blended together in his air; he had suddenly become a master of rhetorical effect—the late elections might, indeed, have been governed by passion rather than reason, but it was the passion of men who loved their country, bent on securing at any cost what they deemed its good; hence the refusal by labourers, with a few shillings weekly wage, of bribes which,

to their poverty, meant wealth. The second Bill, like the first, was brought in without a division, the chorus of "Ayes" being broken by a single "No." Both in the House and out of it, during the interval between the first and second readings of the new Bill, took place some criticism of a provision limiting the £10 household suffrage to cases in which rents were paid half-yearly and not quarterly. The second reading debate began July 4th; long before the doors were regularly open, while the place remained in the housemaids' hands, members trooped town to fix their cards upon their seats; Joseph Hume, entering the Chamber at 10 a.m., the hour to which it had been adjourned, found himself dispossessed of his usual seat, which, among some three hundred more, had in this way been ticketed; Speaker Manners Sutton, in reply to his complaint, recommended to members generally, and to Hume in particular, a spirit of courtesy and accommodation. Three days and three nights continued the discussion; at 5 a.m., Thursday, July 7th, took place a division that strikingly showed the redistribution of party forces effected since the previous April; the ministerialists had now increased a majority of one to one hundred and thirty-six (367 to 231); the hostile minority proved about numerically equal to the boroughs doomed by the Bill; further analysis brought home to every dissentient some personal interest for his opposition. The day of the popular victory in the House was signalised in the City by the Government prosecution of a future member of the House, whose appearance in his rather antiquated costume, with his tall and erect figure, was less that of an agitator than of an old-fashioned country gentleman of Quaker associations; this was William Cobbett; his influence as a writer made him one of the mightiest forces which produced reform. His mastery of vigorous Anglo-Saxon; his treatment by the Grey Government immediately won him the seat for Oldham, and

led the Radical reaction against the reforming Whigs; Cobbett, like the Charing Cross tailor, Francis Place, was popularly credited with a chief part in the true authorship of the Grey Reform Bill; Lord Brougham was only one among the members of the Reform Cabinet called as witnesses for the defence in the present trial.

Meanwhile mature and detailed examination of the measure and of cognate matters was strengthening the majority in the House far more than could be done by the organised agitation. The existing system of representation was reduced to an absurdity by the presence of not more than from one to eight £10 householders in several of the old boroughs, now threatened, not with disfranchisement, but with incorporation into neighbouring places. On the other hand, the new constituencies would in some places be less numerous than the old; thus Preston, Birmingham, and Manchester were, it was said, to find themselves partially disfranchised. Notwithstanding the fresh leverage which such details gave to the Opposition, the enemies of the Bill were obliged to confess that the best they could hope was indefinitely to obstruct it. The motion to go into committee was barred by the complaint of Lord Maitland, representing Appleby, of a mistake in the description of his borough, entitling a deputation from it to be heard at the Bar; this proved the opportunity of the Tory irreconcilable, Sir Charles Wetherell, a chivalrously honest Protestant fanatic, an evangelical reproduction of Walpole's Jacobite foe, "Downright" Shippen; after he had prolonged the sitting nearly to daybreak by repeated divisions, he consented to an adjournment; on reaching Palace Yard he found it raining heavily. "If," he said, "I had known this, I would have made them walk a few more times in and out the lobby." The rest of the struggle at St. Stephen's resembled the incidents of an Homeric battle; the rival champions of threatened constituencies or interests engaged

in a series of duels, entertaining enough at the time, but of no lasting importance, and of no interest now; among the most notable of the men thus pitted against each other were the Sabbatarian, Sir Andrew Agnew, member for the Wigton burghs, and the opponent of the Slave Trade, F. Buxton, member for Weymouth. These tactics did nothing more than waste time; how, September 22nd, 1831, the Reform Bill (number two) passed the Commons by three hundred and forty-five to two hundred and thirty-six, was rejected (October 8th) by the Lords (199 to 158); how the third Reform Bill, introduced in the March of 1832, eventually was accepted by the Upper House without any fresh creation of Peers—these things belong to the history of the country at large, rather than of the Lower House.

# CHAPTER XV.

## THE LAST OF ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL.

The first Reform Parliament—Immediate results of the Reform Bill—Radical successes—Thomas Slingsby Duncombe—Tory losses—Manners Sutton re-elected to the Chair—His parliamentary knowledge almost useless in the reformed House—Daniel O'Connell—His influence—His speaking—O'Connell's allies—Daniel Whittle Harvey—Tennyson D'Eyncourt—George Grote—Mr. Pease, quaker, elected for Durham—The literary members, Bulwer Lytton, Dr. Bowring, and Silk Buckingham—Sir William Follett—Serjeant Talfourd—Peter Borthwick—Scene between Kearsley and Hume—Members of the Cabinet, Lord Howick, Poulett, Thomson, Lord Palmerston, "Jock" Campbell—The Speakers, Sir Charles Manners Sutton and James Abercromby—Lord Stanley's "Thimblerig" speech are the last notable incidents in the old House—The burning of the House—The probable cause of the fire—The temporary Chamber—Sir Robert Peel—Prime Minister—His appearance and dress—His popularity in the country—His untiring energy—Goulburn—His speaking—Sir Edward Knatchbull—Sir Henry Hardinge—Sydney Herbert—Winthrop—Mackworth—Praed—Wynn—W. E. Gladstone first returned for Newark—His maiden speech—Cobden and Bright first take their seats in the temporary House—Agitation against Protection—Hume an early advocate of Protection—Incidents in the temporary House—Lord George Bentinck—Free Trade carried—Peel expelled on the question of Irish Coercion.

JANUARY 29th, 1833, was the day on which the first House of Commons of the Reform Parliament held its opening sitting. The elections had not begun till the close of the preceding year; they had barely been completed when the King's speech was read. Thus far the operation of the Bill proved satisfactory; the multiplication of polling places had divided and disarmed the mob, in the past concentrated at the hustings; had spread from these headquarters their violence

and disturbance during a whole fortnight; the drunkenness and riot of electoral period were now confined within two days instead of the same number of weeks. Other and different, though not less important, consequences of the Bill were also even now becoming apparent; it looked indeed at first as if, under the system introduced by the Bill, there would be no place in English politics for its Whig authors; during the elections the Radicals in the constituencies had exacted pledges from their candidates, and returned them as delegates rather than Imperial legislators. Hobhouse, a leader of the intellectual Radicals, the friend of Byron, and his contemporary at Trinity, Cambridge, with Burdett as his colleague, headed the poll at Westminster; on his appointment as Irish Secretary he was returned without opposition; the Radicals did equally well elsewhere; it was growing a question into which of the two parties of the future the Whigs eventually would be absorbed—the Conservatives under Peel or the Radicals under the pupils of Jeremy Bentham; a little later, when he had exchanged Hertford for Finsbury, and had received Thomas Wakley as his colleague, Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, a man of fashion, a Radical edition of Charles Fox without his genius, his eloquence, and his follies, socially promoted, in the same way that Milner Gibson was afterwards to do, the organization of Radicalism; meanwhile, in 1832, the popular expositor of the cult, William Cobbett, had come in for Oldham; the defeat of Hunt at Preston was more than counterbalanced by the return of two most aggressive Radicals, Wigney and Faithfull, under the shadow of the Royal Pavilion in the new borough of Brighton, as well as by the choice of the pugilist and bookmaker, Gully, at Pontefract. On the other hand, the enemies of Reform who had rallied round the Gascoyne amendment in 1831 were by no means decisively dispersed; the ablest lawyer and the most effective speaker the Tories had, Sir Charles

Wetherell, did indeed lose his seat for Oxford, as did Sir E. Sugden, a future Lord Chancellor, at Cambridge; John Wilson Croker was assisted by his constituents to keep his vow of not sitting in a reformed House of Commons. Against these Tory losses must be set the return of Sir Harry Inglis for Oxford University, of Sir R. Vyvyan, the extreme Tory chief, for Bristol, of Lord Sandon for Liverpool, and of the most uncompromising of anti-Reformers of subaltern rank, Alexander Baring for Essex.

Sir Charles Manners Sutton, first voted to the Chair in 1817, had now earned his retiring pension; his sympathies were not with ministers; he would have been a dangerous recruit to the Tories in the Upper House; his knowledge of the Lower was invaluable; eventually he consented to continue his office; he found himself in a new world at St. Stephen's; members complimented him on his unrivalled knowledge of forms and rules; as a fact, he found his past experience positively good for nothing and himself as great a novice * as any of them; this, from an official, whose incomparable experience of the House obtained its most practical acknowledgment in the majority of two hundred and forty-one, which, against thirty-one votes, given to his involuntary rival, Littleton placed Manners Sutton once more in the Chair. Among the subjects recommended by the King to the first Reformed House were the renewal of the Bank, of the East India Company's charters, and the temporalities of the Church in Ireland; the Address had scarcely been voted when it became clear that the session would be predominantly Irish. The central figure was, of course, Daniel O'Connell, the Liberator, who at this time might have been called *the* member for Ireland rather than merely an Irish member; eventually this typically Celtic orator became so powerful in debate as to defy all his contemporaries except Stanley; his authority

* Speaker Sutton's own words, quoted by *Raikes' Journal*, Vol. I., p. 100

grew from small beginnings. It was only by degrees that he won even the attention of St. Stephen's; it was even longer before his influence in Ireland extended beyond the humblest classes; even when, in a later session, 1834, he began his campaign for the repeal of the Union, those who knew him best thought him already falling, Lucifer-like, to rise no more. But Lord Melbourne's fall in November, 1834, and his succession by a Conservative Government, creating a Liberal or Radical reaction, gave to O'Connell's waning power just the revival that it needed; he sunk all his differences with the Whigs, he dropped for a time many favourite points in his own propaganda; thus began his development of an individual ambition, which caused the Duke of Wellington to say, that, since the Revolution of 1688, no single man had possessed O'Connell's power; he uttered no sentence in which he did not make his genius felt; torrent-like, he rushed on from point to point, giving his hearers no time to weigh the value of his arguments, simply leading them captive to any conclusion he chose; only when he had sat down and the magician's voice was no more heard, did his audience realise the audacious assumptions, the unproved assertions, and the inconsecutive reasonings of the Irish rhetorician, greater as an actor even than a speaker, and able to simulate in his eyes and face, not less than in his voice, any feelings which it might be effective to assume. In the Irish debates of 1833 were grouped round the Irish giant puny allies as Colonel Davis and the able and acrid Radical, J. A. Roebuck, the tear 'em of a later day, who, preserved like a wasp in oil, survived to buzz and sting in the Victorian age. "The most eloquent man I ever heard in the Houses was Daniel Whittle Harvey." So, to the present writer, once remarked Benjamin Disraeli; in the years following the Reform Bill this forgotten but extraordinary man represented Southwark, and, though sometimes patriotically assisting O'Connell, was

making his mark chiefly as a Radical champion; he had been a Reformer when the Whig leaders themselves flinched; he now made common cause with Joseph Hume in the attack on public expenditures, pensions, and sinecures; when at his best, and when his speeches had been thoroughly rehearsed, the words fell with a soft symphony of music on the ear; his white hair and well-made figure, generally clad in blue coat with velvet collar, were also points in this speaker's favour. Near Whittle Harvey sat another metropolitan member, the best known portion of whose name was not then immortalised; Tennyson D'Eyncourt, who represented Lambeth, had much the same stature, the same black hair, dark complexion, and fine features that men were soon to associate with his kinsman, the future Poet Laureate; by vocation a soap-boiler, he had been a Reformer before Lord Grey, in 1827 he had endeavoured to enfranchise Birmingham, and had spared neither money nor work in the cause. Not unlike D'Eyncourt externally was another more famous early Radical, George Grote; even then he was writing an immortal History of Greece, with a Radical moral, but was chiefly known as Bentham's chief convert among the City bankers; Grote's rare speeches in the House were very short, philosophical essays, written out and learnt by heart before delivery, but clearly expressed, free from pedantic platitude, and generally well received.

While the first Irish party at St. Stephen's was organising itself under O'Connell, there were not wanting other signs of the new era opened by the Reform Chamber. In 1832 the southern division of Durham chose, in Mr. Pease, the first Quaker who had entered St. Stephen's; after he had presented himself to the Speaker, he claimed to make an affirmation instead of taking the oath; the matter was referred by Lord Althorp, leader of the House, to a committee; the claim was unanimously allowed; a little strange to it at first,

Mr. Pease soon became so much at home in the House as facetiously to propose himself to his leader as a suitable Secretary at War. Before August 29th, 1833, the first reformed House was prorogued; Mr. Grant had carried through it his Jewish Relief Bill, only, of course, to be lost in the Lords'. The philanthropic movements, which Burke had the honour of beginning, were soon appreciably advanced in this House by F. Buxton, already mentioned as the slave emancipator, and by Lord Ashley, afterwards Lord Shaftesbury, "the poor man's Peer," as the leader of factory reform. Both these causes are so exhaustively chronicled in accessible volumes as to call only for passing reference here.

The originators of these humane enterprises were often assisted by the literary members of the reformed House, now constituting almost a party by themselves; of this coterie, notwithstanding his affectations and absurdities, the then E. L. Bulwer, afterwards the first Lord Lytton, was the chief; he spoke as sparingly as Grote; his speeches were as elaborately premeditated as those of the Greek historian; they had been rehearsed before the looking-glass, not a word or a gesture was extempore. Tall, handsome, with aquiline nose and angular face, he first became known as inseparable from the green-coloured gaberdine, afterwards affected by Disraeli; his seat in the House was generally near Lord Francis Leveson-Gower, from whose German scholarship Bulwer greatly profited. Near these was the member for Kilmarnock, of complexion perenially and abnormally pale, that formed a striking contrast to his jet-black hair; Dr. Bowring, after being Consul at Hong Kong, obtained his knighthood and his Governorship of the place simultaneously in 1854, concluding his commercial treaty with Siam soon after ordering that Canton bombardment which, growing out of the "Orcha Arrow" affair, nearly upset the Palmerston Government; in the thirties of the nineteenth century he had given no promise

of these later developments, was a clear, concise and frequent speaker on second-rate subjects, generally to be known by his bustling, and hurrying about the House with a bundle of papers in his hand and documents bulging out of his pocket, after the earlier manner of Edmund Burke. Burke's real successor as "member for India" was the founder of the *Athenæum*, the member for Sheffield, whom, in an evil hour, the Government had made their enemy by inflicting upon him certain pecuniary losses in the East; this was Silk Buckingham, a noticeably handsome man, whose physiognomy was strikingly reproduced at a much later date by his son, Leicester Buckingham, editor of the *Morning Star;* Silk Buckingham, a walking encyclopædia of Oriental affairs, had only one great fault—that of extreme wordiness in his oratorical, as in his literary style.

Among the more distinguished members of the House after the first Reform Act, on the Tory side, were Sir William Follett, not only a great lawyer and generally of the highest intellectual power, but a model in many ways of oratorical excellence—clear, easy, simple, effective at any hour, a master of artistic gesture and elocution; personally noticeable for the darkness of his hair and complexion, he resembled in these respects his Liberal friend and rival, Serjeant Talfourd; this member had raised the highest expectations in the House only, as at first it seemed, to disappoint them; for his maiden speech—a reply to Follett—had been a failure, chiefly because he had risen at an hour when the House, fatigued, listless, and impatient for dinner, could only greet with confusing noise sentences full of ability and eloquence, but pitched in too low a key easily to be heard; such a mistake was common to lawyers, who forgot that the Chamber was at least six times as large as the courts they professionally addressed, and its members diffused over even a broader extent of space.

Among other notabilities of the reformed House about this time were Mr. Peter Borthwick, short of stature, one of the handsomest men of his day, whose graceful figure, fine features, and wealth of black hair were the admiration of London drawing-rooms; unrivalled as a platform speaker before he sat for Evesham, Mr. Borthwick proved unsurpassed as a debater at St. Stephen's. The West India interest induced him locally to examine the condition of the slaves, and as the ablest man they could find, entrusted their entire cause to him in the House.* For the most part, the proceedings at St. Stephen's during this time were more decorous than had been thought possible by those who saw in the Reform Bill resolution "red ruin and the breaking up of laws"; the most notable scene occurred in committee, when Kearsley, the member for Wigan, alluding to the compliments paid him, charged Joseph Hume with being a "complete humbug." The manner in which the accuser, a short, thick-set, and singularly good-natured man, brought out these words, looking the while Hume himself full in the face, was followed by a series of incidents, disorderly enough, but ludicrous rather than disastrous; Hume took the remark as a joke, laughingly observing that the honourable member must see double, but emphatically repudiating to be controlled by him or by any other man; mimicking Hume's pronunciation, Kearsley said he could see well enough to "tottle" up figures as correctly as his opponent; the double sight charge had, of course, the convivial allusion contained in the familiar couplet about Pitt and Dundas—

> I cannot see the Speaker, Hal, can you?
> Not see the Speaker, Billy, I see two.

Among those of Cabinet rank at this time were two who have

* Mr. Borthwick was also at one time administrator in the office of the *Morning Post*, and laid there the foundations of a success whose structure was afterwards crowned by his distinguished and surviving son, Lord Glenesk.

lived into our day; as Colonial Under-Secretary, Earl Grey's son, Lord Howick, surpassed the measure of his father's Liberalism, proved essential to legal emancipation, and displayed the masculine mind, the ready excellence in debate, together with the acute severity towards those who differed from him, which, as a Peer and Colonial minister, he showed afterwards in the Upper House; nor did his person change greatly, for as a young man he looked old and had developed the same disability in his right foot. A contrast in all respects with Lord Howick was Poulett Thomson, member for Manchester, President of the Board of Trade, a forerunner of the school which was to take its name from the Lancashire capital, and in the cause that Bright, Cobden, and Villiers were to carry to victory; thoroughly versed in all commercial subjects, he lessened the effect of his speeches by disciplining to the drawl of a pulpit the Lancashire burr that gave a richness to Stanley's delivery first, as to that of Gladstone afterwards, as well as by the general appearance of a chronic sufferer from profound dejection. To a twentieth century reader, the most interesting figure in the House was that of Lord Palmerston, afterwards to become its leader, now Foreign Secretary; that office gave him an importance in the country which he did not possess in the House, where, as yet, his round, dark, but well-chiselled face, elaborately dressed hair, together with the manifest care given to his toilet and dress and his agreeable manner, had secured him from the *Times* newspaper the adhesive label of Cupid; in the House and about its precincts he was often seen in conversation with the Attorney-General, who, in personal appearance, constituted an effective foil to himself; this was one of the Edinburgh members, a future Lord Chancellor, then familiarly known as "Jock" Campbell; of rough aspect, husky voice, vigorously determined manner, Sir John Campbell was now becoming a personage at St. Stephen's; terse, pithy, with a Scotch accent,

stronger even than that of Joseph Hume, uncouth even to grotesqueness, he always commanded attention; in the debates on municipal reform he took a placidly humorous pleasure in those attacks upon the old corporations, which he saw were to the Tories as the red rag to the bull; together with the Solicitor-General, Rolfe, an awkward debater, but a political force in his day, Campbell, like the Lord Advocate, Murray, greatly contributed to the organising of Liberal opinion both at St. Stephen's and in the country north and south of the Tweed; this was the work which Francis Jeffrey and John Clark had scandalised the fashionable society of their native land by beginning.

Of the two Speakers during the period now reached, Sir Charles Manners Sutton combined with almost unprecedented perfection the composure, courtesy, quickness of decision, and urbane gravity of manner, that more than ever in a reformed House were essential for the Chair; his successor, James Abercromby, had scarcely been installed when his patience, tact, and strength bore successfully the searching ordeal of the longest session since 1688; the different sittings of the House were protracted to hours hitherto unknown; at least once Speaker Abercromby never quitted the chair between 6 p.m. and the next day's dawn.

With Speaker Abercromby begins a new and the concluding division of this work. The scenes thus far, together with the chief actors in them, briefly described, took place in the building to which the Commons migrated from the Chapter House in 1547. St. Stephen's Chapel, as fitted up for the popular representatives, was of oblong shape, some ninety feet long and thirty broad, with an octagonal tower at each corner outside, lighted by five windows, consisting of two storeys, the upper of which was allotted to the Speaker. Early in the nineteenth century the front had been rebuilt in Gothic style, veneered with stucco: the structure was an ill-assorted

and tasteless mass of masonry, the less impressive and the more inartistic in appearance from its contrast with the neighbouring abbey and hall; such was the place in which the popular Assembly, having first made itself the depository of sovereign power, was at last, by the Bill of 1832, rendered really representative as well. A single incident in the course of one among its most brilliant members signalises the closing months of the Commons in St. Stephen's Chapel. Unlike Fox, Disraeli, Gladstone, Stanley, Lord Grey's Irish and Colonial Secretary leapt by one bound, without failure, into the first place among debaters; his apt beauty of language was only equalled by his irritable intolerance of temper. On July 2nd, 1834, his Irish difference with his chief of the past four years inspired him with the coarsely passionate invective against his Whig colleagues as a set of political sharpers; this was the notorious "Thimblerig" speech, afterwards so regretted by its maker as to produce a profound apology to Lord Grey, from whose followers he had, of course, for ever separated himself.

On the evening of October 16th, 1834, the wind blowing briskly from the south-west, and tending to become more southerly, the moon had just reached its full, when the heavy masses of clouds, floating across the sky, were suddenly lit up by sparks of fire first, sheet of flame afterwards, rising from the old Court of Requests, which, since 1800, had served as a chamber for the Peers. What had happened was first discovered by the wife of the door-keeper, named Mullencamp, who gave the alarm to the housekeeper on the premises, a Mrs. Wright. The Clerk of the Works, from the Office of the Woods and Forests, was immediately on the spot; facility of communication between the Chambers of the two Estates and their adjoining offices had been the object both at the first and in all the subsequent structural changes; no obstacle, therefore, checked the progress of the fire; beginning at

6 p.m., it quickly enveloped the whole pile. The blaze continued throughout the night; the rising sun looked down upon a heap of smouldering ashes on the spot occupied during two hundred and eighty-seven years by the manufactory of English statute law, the school of national statesmanship and oratory. Popular suspicion pointed to the ruin as the work of political incendiaries; none of the stories circulated in support of this notion seemed to have borne investigation; in the course of the previous day the Clerk of the Works had given orders to burn some two cart-loads of the notched sticks called tallies, used, till October, 1826, for keeping the Exchequer accounts; these were too rapidly placed in the stoves used in heating the chambers; the temperature became so high that the dry and inflammable matter at once ignited. Slight indications of what was going on had, it transpired, been given during the previous day; the committee of enquiry reported the deputy-housekeeper guilty of the grossest negligence, but of no criminal design.

The business of providing fresh accommodation for the burnt-out Commons was at once taken in hand; the walls of the old Court of Requests, where the fire originated and where the Peers had been sitting, were now promptly provided with a new roof and suitably fitted up for the Commons; this work was begun early in the November following the fire; it was continued with such dispatch as, at the opening of the next session, February 19th, 1835, to enable members to assemble in their new temporary House; at the same time fresh lobbies and other offices for this period of transition were provided at a total cost of rather less than £50,000.

The sequel of the Reform Bill had been the financial and ecclesiastical policy of Whig Governments, ending in popular exasperation against the official successors of Lord Grey. Meanwhile the country looked to the first titular leader of Conservatism, as distinguished from Toryism, to restore con-

fidence and prosperity; Sir Robert Peel was, indeed, more than suspected of toleration of, and of sympathy with, the new democratic movement; the extreme Tories, therefore, distrusted him; the party, as a whole, had no option but to accept his leadership; when, therefore, the Commons met in their fresh abode, as he had become, shortly after their farewell sitting in the destroyed chamber, the Premier and leader of the House, as well as Chancellor of the Exhequer, was the author of the recently published Tamworth Manifesto, the latest exposition of Peel's principles and policy; the minister was now a remarkably good-looking man, rather above the usual size, finely proportioned, of a clear complexion, a full round face, framed in hair, which seemed to vary between auburn and red in hue; he generally wore a blue frock-coat, white waistcoat, dark trousers; he invariably displayed a bunch of gold seals, conspicuously hung from his watch-chain. As this presence for the first time entered the improvised chamber, it was observed to be greeted with Tory cheers, more loud and general than till now had been its customary salutes; Sir Robert Peel's then growing popularity with his party, as with the country, was due to several distinct causes; the applausive country gentlemen now remembered that, in 1831, when William IV. had at last consented to the Whig demand for a dissolution of a House, only half a year old, Sir Robert Peel had refused to be silenced by Sir Francis Burdett, or by the Tower guns, announcing the King's impending arrival, and in his spirited attack upon the Whig Cabinet, had reflected an expressed bitter indignation of his party; the whole House and the constituencies were also now impressed by Sir Robert Peel's remarkable capacity for national administration and for parliamentary work; the House of Commons had never seen a man of business more consummate and indefatigable; night after night Peel led the House continuously till it rose; however early it met next day, he was always

in his place; Bills which no other minister could properly explain, or whose details the House could scarcely follow, became, in Peel's hands, simplicity itself; never at a loss for a word, he chose invariably that which best suited his hearers; his self-possession had only once forsaken him—in the debate on Lord Londonderry's appointment to the Russian Ambassadorship; then he first stuttered and stammered as one suffering from an impediment in his speech; presently he came to a dead stop; the very fact, however, of his failure testified to his growing sympathies with the people, and, therefore, did him no harm; it was indeed his confession that he had undertaken a desperate cause; for our new representative at St. Petersburg had just publicly denounced the Poles as a set of rebels, who ought, at any cost, to be coerced into obedience to the Czar Nicholas; Peel, in fact, was resisting his own convictions when he made a show of replying to the eloquent and telling attacks of Richard Lalor Shiel, and his colleague, Charles F. Ferguson.

Among Peel's colleagues, placed in office with him, by the increase of Conservative members as against the Liberal majority, now reduced to one hundred and seven, were famous disciples of Peel, as well suited as himself for the transitional period from a Liberal to a Conservative régime. Now were first heard of the politicians indifferently styled Peelites or Liberal Conservatives. The Home Secretary was, indeed, scarcely less strong a Tory than his colleague at the Foreign Office, the Duke of Wellington himself; the member for Cambridge University, Goulburn, was indeed a High Church Tory; he had recently shown both conviction and courage in declaring that the first day a Dissenter matriculated at Trinity he would strike his son's name off the college books; Whigs and Radicals, infidels and Jacobins, were to him synonymous terms; all were alike bent on the destruction of the altar and the Crown; as a speaker, fluent, without being forcible,

this worthy champion of reaction had an unfailing command of words, faultlessly chosen but absolutely unsupported by the stamina of ideas. Two other equally typical Tories of this period were Sir Edward Knatchbull, the father of a well-known supporter of Mr. Disraeli, when Queen Victoria's first minister—a pleasant speaker, whose chief defect was the impracticability of the opinions he uttered. Sir Henry Hardinge, an uncompromising political follower of Wellington, under whom he had served in the Peninsula, impressed his Tory friends with a sense of intellectual power, due chiefly to a remarkably fine head and a capital House of Commons' manner, which must have been to some extent a prophecy of that by which Mr. Gathorne Hardy, to-day Lord Cranbrook, so often rallied the advanced and despondent Conservatives of his day.

Peel's ministry was enriched by possessing some politicians of rare and of duly-fulfilled promise; the tall, chivalrous presence of Sydney Herbert in the Secretariate of the Board of Control was associated with the handsome poetic figure of Winthrop Mackworth Praed, whose Eton fame had long preceded him at St. Stephen's, and who, in his day, was the most accomplished writer of *vers société* in the English language.* In the House Praed had made his mark by the self-possessed manner, by the strong, distinct, but musical voice with which he denounced the Grey Reform Bill, opposing it clause by clause in committee; he spoke, however, even for that literary period, too much "like a book"; on his legs he would have been more effective if his speeches had not sounded like the echoes of his "leaders" in the *Morning Post*. A Wynn has immemorially represented Montgomeryshire; the particular member of that family, sitting for it in the temporary House, gained the title, since borne by his de-

* Facially Praed's resemblance to his literary successor, Charles S. Calverley, may be seen by comparing the portraits of the two men.

scendants, of the "King of Wales"; his delivery attracted more attention to him than his strongly, but always rationally worded ultra-Tory convictions; his voice, seeming to proceed from the back of his head rather than from his mouth, and was marked by a persistent lisp, which rendered difficult to follow a remarkably discursive diatribe against admitting Dissenters to Oxford and Cambridge, delivered by him in 1834. All these minor but notable figures in the Peelite ranks were dwarfed into insignificance by the Colonial Under-Secretary, W. E. Gladstone; by an ironical coincidence the election of 1832, that enabled Newark to send to St. Stephen's the author of the famous democratic phrase, "Our own flesh and blood," was that which elicited from the ducal patron of the borough on ejecting the five hundred tenants who had voted in their own way, the famous words "May I not do as I like with my own?" Gladstone's maiden speech had been called forth by a personal reference from Lord Howick in the debate on negro emancipation to Sir John Gladstone's plantation in Demerara, as illustrating the mortality among slaves; the new member's deliverance was more subtle and casuistical than such efforts usually were, but it had all the dialectical skill mentioned by Macaulay in his famous criticism; it placed its maker in the first flight of the Commons.

Of a few other parliamentary reputations, scarcely second to Gladstone's, the beginnings were witnessed during the stay of the Commons in their temporary House. Richard Cobden took his seat as member for Stockport in 1841; two years later the city of Durham sent John Bright to co-operate with him in the attack upon Protection. The patrician presence and the silvery tongue of Charles Villiers in the same cause had been felt in the House before either of these dates. As member for Wolverhampton, Villiers rendered to the movement service comparable to that which, according to John Henry Newman, was contributed by the social influence and

personal authority of E. B. Pusey to Oxford Anglicanism. Still earlier, indeed, Joseph Hume, with little or no encouragement in the House, had (1834) advocated the freeing of the ports in a motion, defeated by one hundred and fifty-seven votes. The traditions of both the Pitts adopted by Shelburne, as well as partially given effect to by Huskisson, might have sufficed to render Free Trade respectable; but without the conversion of the popular scion of a territorial family like the member for Wolverhampton, the Whig magnates might not even by Lord John Russell have been so largely won over to the policy that, for the moment, Hume was thought socially to have discredited rather than politically to have advanced.

Before, however, the battle of Free Trade was fought and won by Peel on the floor of St. Stephen's, the redistribution and reorganization of party forces, shattered by the struggles of 1832, were promoted by the agency of other questions in the temporary Chamber. In 1835 Sir Robert Peel forfeited some of the confidence which he had gained with the county members that were the backbone of his party by combining with the Liberal chief, Lord John Russell, successfully to resist, by three hundred and fifty to one hundred and ninety-two, the attempt to abolish the malt tax. The first note against the Anglican Church in Ireland, sounded by Russell's motion for dealing with its surplus revenues (carried by two hundred and eighty-five to two hundred and fifty-eight); the consequent resignation of Peel, succeeded by Melbourne; the establishment of local government by the Municipal Reform Act (London alone being exempted); the concession to Nonconformists of being married in their own chapels; the collision between the two Houses over the Irish Municipal Bill; the first publication by the House itself of its division lists; the reduction to a penny of the newspaper stamp; the rejection of Grote's Ballot Bill; the re-settlement of Canada—all these things took place during the interval dividing the

sittings of the House in the chamber, occupied by it from the days of Cromwell, Eliot, Pym, and Hampden, to those of Walpole, thereafter to the time of Pitt and Fox, from its assembly beneath the roof which rung with the voices of Disraeli and Gladstone at the zenith of their fame.

The temporary home of the Commons had beheld Peel's enthusiastic welcome as the Conservative leader; it was also to witness his defeat and deposition as the penalty for his conversion by events to the Free Trade policy of Hume, of Villiers, of Cobden and Bright. Late in the session of 1845 a Tory squire predicted as imminent the Prime Minister's apostasy from Protection; the imputation was resented more violently by no one than by the member for King's Lynn. Lord George Bentinck, brother of the Duke of Portland, then some years under fifty, in his speech, his manner, and the expression of his dark, determined face, showed the combination of a comprehensive and quickly assimilative intellect, with a narrowness of view and an obstinacy of judgment; he has achieved House of Commons' immortality from his association with Disraeli, and the opportunity, with which he provided that man of genius for rising to the Conservative leadership. When, in 1846, the House met, Peel spoke of the difficulty of insuring the harmonious and united action of an ancient monarchy, proud aristocracy, and a reformed House of Commons; Prince Albert had visited the House to listen to the debate; in his peroration to a speech statistically, in his usual manner, controverting the minister's views, Bentinck denounced Peel for seducing the Queen's husband into being present in the temporary House at the beginning of such a discussion. "As for the aristocracy," said Bentinck, "we are proud of our honour, because we have never been guilty of swindling our opponents, deceiving our friends, and betraying our constituents." Disraeli's invectives were more bitter and sharp; ministers were political pedlars, buying their party in

the cheapest market and selling it in the dearest. The result has been described by Disraeli himself in his life of Lord George Bentinck, and need not be rewritten. The Conservative leader was now victorious in a House of five hundred and fifty-six in the morning of May 15th, 1846. The squires, however, fulfilled their vow of vengeane when, a few days later, they expelled him on the question of Irish Coercion.

# CHAPTER XVI.

## THE HOUSE IN ITS LATEST HOME.

The Commons in its new home—Sir Charles Barry's design chosen—Description of the temporary House—Corresponding sites of the present House and St. Stephen's Chapel—State of parties during first Session in new House—Composition of the Russell Cabinet—The occupants of the Cross Benches—Feargus O'Connor "named"—O'Connor's influence in the House—The formation of the Liberal party by Gladstone and the Conservative by Disraeli—Disraeli's exterior—His maiden speech—Peel's opinion of it—Disraeli as leader of the Opposition—His scanty followers—Attempts to unite Gladstone and Disraeli—Consolidation of the Tory party by Disraeli—Disraeli's tactics—Lord Palmerston—His appearance and speaking—His good humour—Contrasts between Disraeli and Palmerston—The Jewish Relief Bill—A. W. Kinglake—Sir Robert Peel the younger—R. Bernal Osborne—Growing demand for further reform—Russell's Reform Bill of 1866—Introduced to the House by Gladstone—Speakers on it: Harvey, Fawcett, Bright, Bulwer-Lytton, Mill—Lord Robert Cecil's (Lord Salisbury's) maiden speech—His collision with Mr. Gladstone—The Dunkellin amendment throws out the Russell Government—Robert Lowe's denunciation of democracy—Lord Elcho and Edward Horseman—Continued Reform agitation in the country—Henry Drummond's posthumous influence on the Reform Bill of 1867—The Reform Bill of 1867 passed—Gladstone for the first time premier—His Irish Church proposals—Contrast between his bearing on this occasion and on a later occasion—The Household County Franchise Bill of 1884-5—Sir Stafford Northcote—The Fourth Party—Lord Randolph Churchill—Joseph Chamberlain—His maiden speech—His appearance—Lord Hartington—Gladstone's Home Rule Bill thrown out—Randolph Churchill the first promoter of Unionism—Labour members.

THE opening of the grouse season has become the traditional signal for the House of Commons to rise on its long vacation.

Within seventeen years of the burning of St. Stephen's Chapel and the fitting up of the old Court of Requests as a temporary Chamber—just four days in advance of the parliamentary departure to the Scotch moors, August 8th, 1851, the Queen sent the gentlemen of the House of Commons from their new abode upon their autumnal holidays. Experimental sittings had, indeed, before this, soon after its completion, been held in the new Chamber during 1850; after a short experience of its acoustic qualities, the Commons returned to the temporary Chamber, occupied by them since 1834; the high Gothic roof originally possessed by the new building was taken off; its present covering was placed upon it; in 1851 its occupation permanently was effected. After the fire commissioners had enquired as to the practicability of restoring parts of the old building, or the expediency of constructing one that should be entirely new; in 1836, ninety-six designs, sent in by competing architects, were considered, Sir Charles Barry's plan eventually was chosen. In 1839 building preparations commenced; the first stone was laid April 27th, 1840; just ten years afterwards the combined labours of Sir Charles Barry and Mr. Pugin had produced the present pile of Gothic buildings, of its kind the largest and finest probably in Europe. The temporary House, like its destroyed predecessor, had been dark, gloomy, ill-ventilated, and so much too small for the purpose that, of the six hundred and fifty-eight members composing it, only four hundred at the most could at all comfortably find places; down either side ran a gallery, always crammed upon any great occasion; members overflowed into the adjoining apartments, constrained to remain there till they could find seats on the leather-covered benches within; these were so arranged that each seat was about a foot higher than the one in front of it, the first row on both sides being within three feet of the table, at which sat the clerks, presided over by the Speaker in his canopied

chair, with the mace in the foreground; the Speaker's entrance was always through a private door at the river end of the Chamber; the members came in through a portal at the north end; here was the Strangers' Gallery, beneath it were rows of seats, reserved for more or less important persons, generally those interested in the immediate proceedings; the back seat of the Strangers' Gallery received the reporters, the proprietors of whose newspapers, some sixty or seventy in all, paid three guineas a session to a fund given to the door-keepers. The only way in which ladies could witness debates was by an ascent above the ceiling of the House, and by looking down through a large ventilation hole, immediately above the central chandelier. The discomfort of the position, the candle smoke, and the stifling atmosphere, deterred many who would have looked down upon their less uncomfortably situated relatives from applications to be among the fourteen, who were all who could find roosting room at this elevation. A great feature of the old parliamentary premises had been the lobby post-office, kept open till the last moment, so that reporters and others could despatch their missives nearly one hour later than at the General Post Office, and two hours after most of the branch offices had closed. The temporary House, in addition to these conveniences, had a smoking-room, close to, but a few feet higher than, the library (then almost exclusively used by members for its reference books, when they prepared their speeches); this structure practically constituted a smaller or less commodious edition of the existing Chamber, whose total cost, including the Peers' House and offices, amounted to some £3,000,000.

Of the original Chamber, which the old walls of St. Stephen's Chapel enclosed as a shell, wherein, November 23rd, 1641, was debated the Grand Remonstrance—the room refitted by Sir Christopher Wren in 1706, then deprived of the Early English frescoes, that had decorated the Elizabethan

House,* the site is occupied in Barry's building by St. Stephen's Hall, lined, as that is, by statues of famous Parliament men, from Falkland to the second Pitt, Charles James Fox, Burke, and Grattan; beneath this hall still exists a specimen of thirteenth century architecture in St. Stephen's Crypt, less injured by the fire than by ill-usage. Architectural links of a more visible kind between the twentieth century House and earlier epochs are some staircases and archways leading out of St. Stephen's Hall; these, indeed, as seen to-day, are new, but they mark the spot where stood the old doors and stone steps that, in 1547, first admitted the Commons, then fresh from the Chapter House, by a door cut through the wall of Westminster Hall into their new place of council; here, when before dawn, after the Remonstrance had been carried, Cromwell told Falkland that, had things gone otherwise, he would have left England for ever; here, too, were the stairs mounted by Charles I. for the arrest of the five members; not until 1680 was the entrance to the House at these points superseded by a door through the south end of Westminster Hall, directly leading into the lobby of the House. The present west door of St. Stephen's Hall, and the steps thence into Westminster Hall, are on the line of the exact route, habitually used between 1680 and 1834, traversed, among others, by Harley, Somers, St. John, Burke, Erskine, Windham, "Dick" Steele, Perceval, Sir Robert Peel. The steps leading to the Octagon Hall of to-day are in the space once occupied by Solomon's Porch, where, soon after daybreak, February 22nd, 1783, Pitt supported himself with one hand while vomiting, holding the lobby door open with the other the better to hear Fox, to whom he was about to reply; a quarter of a century later, May 11th, 1812, where to-day stands the statue of Burke, Perceval fell before the pistol of Belling-

* These paintings were fully visible to the Tudor M.Ps.; they are referred to by Sir S. Soame in a speech delivered December 12th, 1601.

ham, who must have entered St. Stephen's Hall by the door connecting it with Westminster Hall, first made in 1680. Even the invariable symbol of the House in action has shared in the changes undergone by the building, on whose table it rests; the Speaker's mace of the early Stuart period disappeared with the Crown plate under the Commonwealth, August 9th, 1649; the Republican mace, made in 1649, and ornamented with flowers, with the arms of England and Ireland in the place of the Royal armorial bearings, vanished into space soon after Cromwell, when clearing the House, had ordered "that bauble" to be removed; the mace actually in use in the twentieth century is without any inscription; from its initials, C. R., and character of its workmanship, it may be referred to the Restoration.

The first complete session of the House in its new home was opened in person by the Queen, February 3rd, 1852. The completion by Russell of Peel's fiscal policy; the organization in the House, as in the country, of the new Liberal party, absorbing what had been most energetic among the old Whigs, and most advanced among the disbanded Peelites —these, together with the development of new personal reputations by the opportunities thus afforded, were among the earlier events witnessed by the Commons at their new address; after this the chief incidents which remain to be noticed are, first, those which confirmed or increased the fame of Palmerston, Disraeli, Gladstone; secondly, those more or less directly associated with the more distinguished among the successors of those famous members. As Prime Minister, Russell scarcely realised that, with the entrance of the Commons into their fresh home there had also begun an era entirely new, controlled by forces, as yet unknown, equally at Westminster and in the political system of the country; one of his colleagues had reminded the minister of these facts in some remarks, ventured upon the Russell Cabinet's

composition; of those who had seats in the Cabinet seven were Peers; two, Palmerston and Russell, belonged to the titled class; of the other Commoners, four were baronets; one of these had a nobleman both as his father-in-law and brother-in-law; another was connected even more closely with the titular aristocracy.

In the old House, a little further than the point of entrance, were some seats arranged at right angles to the regular benches along the walls, traditionally allotted to neutral members; they were called the cross-benches; they were occupied often by the Peelites, as well as by the Whig secessionists from Grey; in such a place had Stanley made the "Thimblerig" speech already described; here he had as his constant companion Sir James Graham; * in the new House the occupants of these seats were, and are, spoken of as the "gentlemen below the gangway"; the companionships witnessed on the seats thus indicated were as strange as the proverbial bed-fellows of misfortune; the ultra-Tory, Sir Charles Wetherell, the extreme Radical, Henry Hunt; Sir Robert Peel, William Cobbett, Sir Robert Inglis, the champion of Anglican establishment, Gillon, its bitterest foe, were in this part of the House, all brought into the closest neighbourhood by the centripetal force of impartial disagreement with the ins or the outs. Here, too, might have been seen two Liberals of mutually opposite types, whose career at St. Stephen's practically had closed before the new House was entered; Macaulay's parliamentary work may be said to have ended with his last speech in the Reform debates. The decisive sign of Feargus O'Connor's insanity had been given when, as member for Nottingham, he had disregarded the Speaker's threat of "naming," had been committed to the Serjeant-at-Arms, and had thus illustrated the unbroken con-

* In the Upper House corresponding stations were taken up by the Duke of Richmond and Lord Ripon, who had left Lord Grey at the same time as Stanley.

tinuity of custom in the Commons from Georgian, even from Cromwellian times, when "naming" began to be known as the extreme penalty reserved for impieties towards the Chair, such as the calling on Mr. Speaker for a song. Feargus O'Connor had some qualifications for popular leadership in Ireland as well as in England, where he cemented the alliance begun by O'Connell between Irish Nationalism and English Radicalism; O'Connor's Chartist petition, with its bogus signatures—*e.g.*, Chucks the Marine, Peter Simple, Prince Albert, and Pug Nose—ended in the comic collapse of disappearance in a hansom cab; of powerful, dignified person, of ancient birth, and of some natural eloquence, O'Connor, in the House, influenced not only Irish politics, but English political thinkers, such as Disraeli and Bulwer Lytton, both of whom supported the Chartist inquiry into the wrongs of the industrial classes, nor were they deterred from expressing that opinion with their vote by the taunt of Chartist sympathies; the Irish Radical is to-day seen to be merely a politician, a little too advanced for his own day.

The fusion by Gladstone, more than by any other of Russell's successors, of Whig and Peelite elements into a liberalism, so united as to make him the greatest legislative force of the nineteenth century, was accomplished about the same time, both in the country and in the new Commons' Chamber. The other great achievement gradually completed during the earlier years in that building was the gradual reconstruction by Disraeli of the Conservative party after its disintegration by Peel. In the December of 1837 the House had been astonished by the appearance of the new member for Maidstone. His costume and countenance both suggested the associations of the theatre; a face lividly pale, brought out in peculiar relief against a bottle-green frock-coat, which, thrown open, did not conceal a profusion of gold chain and other jewellery; the white waistcoat thus decorated was here-

after to become part of the uniform of the party of Young England, inspired and held together as it was by the intellect of old Judea; florid assurance, degenerating into ludicrous absurdity, at last put down by inextinguishable laughter—such is the traditional account of that maiden effort. The occasion was Irish; an association, presided over by Spottiswoode, the printer, for testing the validity of the elections on the other side of St. George's Channel, had been denounced by the Radicals and Hibernians as the "Spottiswoode gang"; the attack was led by Blewitt, and discouraged by Lord John Russell, on the ground that no sound plea existed for exceptional measures with reference to election petitions; before he rose in the House, Disraeli had made his mark in the country as an original and effective hustings speaker; he was afterwards to become a master of the oratorical style which St. Stephen's chiefly loves; now, however, his style was scarcely more to that Assembly's taste than his toilet; the antithetical and grotesque smartness about the Daphne of Liskeard and the Tityrus of the Treasury bench was an error of exaggeration, based in inexperience, and, as all good judges, among them Peel himself, saw, sure before long to be corrected; Peel indeed, who had differed from his master, Canning, only on the Catholic question, applauded, as amazingly clever, the satire on the Irish-Whig alliance—"Melbourne, flourishing in one hand the keys of St. Peter and in the other the cap of liberty"; Disraeli's triumph over the personal antipathies, undoubtedly excited by him, was a tribute not only to his own genius, but to the essential fairness of a body never guilty of invincible prejudice against real ability or even merit of any kind.

Sir Walter Scott, who died in the same year as the measure passed into law, in his last public utterance had wished to spend his parting breath in opposing the Reform Bill; Lord Sidmouth, speaking to Grey, had said: "May God

forgive you on account of this Bill, for I can't"; within two years had been the reply, "We shall be unpopular, for ours is the most aristocratic measure ever passed in Parliament." The House, however, had long been settled in its new home before, in its chief features, tone, and taste, it became visibly much more democratic than it had been when it was chosen by the borough-mongers instead of the ten-pounders; its practices and the speaking which it liked remained largely identical with those growing out of its composition in Hanoverian or even in Stuart times. The shire knights, as has been seen repeatedly in these pages, were the nucleus and backbone of the Assembly; the county representation had always been the strength of the aristocracy; the Reform Act had increased these members from eighty-two to one hundred and forty-three; it had reduced the borough representatives from four hundred and three to three hundred and twenty-four. A Chamber thus tinged with the old patrician flavour, and sympathising with the literary and classical traditions of English education, could appreciate equally well the universal culture and thoughtful eloquence of Gladstone, and the polished satire of his rival. Peel, in his enterprise of Conservative construction from the ruins of Toryism, had been helped by the blunders in Whig finance, as well as the wide and deep alarm at the revolutionary leanings of that party. Disraeli entirely lacked all such aids to success; the General Election of 1847 had scattered the Protectionist remnant to the four winds. When, the February of 1849, after Bentinck's death, Disraeli took up the Opposition leadership, there were not many more than a hundred members whom he could count upon as his followers; the House had yet to realise that Free Trade was rather a detail of commercial administration than a dividing question of constitutional politics. During the first decade of the House in its new home, the personal interest of what passed

within it centred round the attempts to effect a union between Gladstone, as the hope of the stern, unbending Toryism, described by Macaulay, and his gifted antagonist, who had already been aristocrat, democrat, Tory, and Radical by turns, who had boasted of being sprung from the people, and of being a gentleman of the Press, but who had become the organising spirit and the intellectual soul of the country gentleman, betrayed, as they still complained, by Peel; that statesman, indeed, though in the direct line of succession from Pitt and Canning, had never been a Tory of the old territorial kind, nor satisfied an essential condition for belonging to the Tory school; by the time that the House had settled down in its present home, the Tory creed had become the anachronism and impossibility that Bolingbroke, "to the grief of his soul," nearly one hundred and fifty years earlier, had foreseen. "This will never do, Mr. Pitt," replied George III. to Chatham, when told that he must take his ministers from the great Revolution families; the King for the time carried his point; those politicians who thought as he did on that matter were Tories; those who asserted his obligation to receive for his servants the nominees of the House or the country were Whigs; Peel had been brought up to hate the Whigs; he was never in a position to show himself a Tory; his mind may have been, as Disraeli called it, "one great appropriation clause"; his mission was to consolidate the popular resistance to innovation generally, and to discipline into a political army the malcontents with Whig methods; the Conservatism thus created in the House was afterwards strengthened by Disraeli's incorporation into it of fashionable prejudices against the opposite cult, not only as politically unsound, but as socially bad form; before that, however, he was to lay the foundation of the democratic Conservatism, which subsequently Randolph Churchill was to ornament and organize.

Meanwhile, and for the present, the Conservatives in the House were in a plight which seemed to threaten them with degeneration into a sect like the Nonconformists at the Restoration, the Jacobites when George II. came to the Throne, the Repealers after O'Connell's fall, the Home Rulers in our own day after the collapse of Parnell. On the other hand, many of the Peelites, apart from Free Trade, were as good Conservatives as at one time had been their leader; the Whigs as yet had developed none of the Conservative tendencies, which have since robbed them of some of their terrors; Lord Melbourne, meeting, about this time, Disraeli at dinner at Mrs. Norton's, humorously regretted he could not at once help the young man to become Prime Minister; unintentionally, however, he prepared the way for it by providing the author of the Runnymede letters with the opportunities which first publicly tested his mettle. Disraeli began his Opposition leadership in the House with one declared object, the reconstitution of Conservatism in the Commons; his first step was taken in 1849, with a motion for an inquiry into the burdens upon land; taxation pressed unequally on the agricultural classes; Bright and Cobden both admitted the existence of real distress among the farmers; as country gentlemen, the Peelites could not but desire compensation from their tenants; as Free Traders they were pledged against anything approaching to Protection. A motion, which assured relief to the landed interest, without contradicting the gospel of Free Trade, would give the hundred and fifty members who followed Disraeli a common ground on which they could unite against the Government; the Free Trade Peelites would thus begin the wholesome experience of finding themselves in the same lobby as their heretical brethren, the Protectionists; the result was the best division the Conservatives for a long time had secured, one hundred and eighty-nine to two hundred and eighty; in

1850 Disraeli followed up these tactics by another motion for inquiry into agricultural distress; now more than sixty of those who had opposed him in the year before went into the lobby with him—amongst them Gladstone, who, on this occasion only, separated himself from Peel. The Ministerial majority now sunk to twenty-one (273 to 252). Motions to repeal the window tax and the malt tax, lost respectively by three and by one hundred and twenty-four, further exercised the Opposition's capacity for voting together; the Russell Government now began to totter; in the February of 1851 Locke-King's motion for assimulating county to borough franchise gave, as it seemed, Russell the chance of riding for the fall; beaten on that issue by one hundred to fifty-two, the minister resigned; though Lord Derby's inability to form a Cabinet sent Russell back afterwards, the prestige of official Whiggism in the House and in the country had gone. Not, indeed, till more than twenty years after his earliest successes in leadership did Disraeli, as Conservative Premier, find himself with a working majority in the House.

He had held his own against its most famous members; often had he been pitted against a middle-aged, well set-up member, who, seldom entering the House much before 5 p.m., at the back of the Speaker's chair, swung himself with a quick stride into the middle of the Treasury bench; Lord Palmerston sat there with his face shaded by his hat, motionless and apparently asleep, save when on his legs or in the tea-room. A frock-coat, tightly buttoned up to the collar, black tie and dark trousers, all fitting easily, were his habitual costume; even after dinner he seldom or never wore evening dress; his style of speaking, of the club conversational type, clear, concise, as skilful in its omissions as in its utterances, exactly suited his audience; perhaps his gravest mistake in tact was, during the Crimean debates, the allusion to Bright

as the "reverend member"; he scored a better point when he rallied Bright on his pronunciation as "Pitchley of the famous Pytchley pack," and retorted the charge of levity upon that censor by pointing out that his homily contained no less than ten jokes, not one of which, however, could be accused of lightness; Disraeli's sneer at Palmerston for passing the time in getting his party into messes and out of them, elicited, in the session of 1857, the obvious rejoinder that this was better than, like Disraeli himself, to bring one's party into difficulties and not to bring it out. The contrast between the person and manner of the two men emphasized other dissimilarities. Lord Palmerston, when about to make a joke, seemed to beam and smile with every feature; his face began to suggest the reflection of it in the concavity of a spoon, growing broader and shorter till the original lineaments were lost in an all-dominating grin; Disraeli often made the House laugh, first at and then with him; his own fixed expression, during nearly a generation in the House, in his lighter moods, was a contemptuous smile, in his severer, the frowning impacivity of an enigma incarnate. Yet he understood the Assembly not less accurately than did Palmerston, he could adapt his speech to its varying moods quite as happily; his reply to Dr. Kenealy's motion, growing out of the Tichborne case, against Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, was a masterpiece of parliamentary persiflage; some of its effect evaporated in the inaccurate report, which substituted "adamentine" for "Rhadamanthine," in allusion to the air, with which the Lord Chief Justice did not enter London drawing-rooms. On another occasion, during the Household Franchise discussion of 1867, Disraeli impressed the House by his tactful dignity at a trying juncture; his private secretary, Mr. Ralph Earle, whom he had brought into the House in a subordinate office, denounced his chief for betraying the Tory interest. Disraeli, refusing to be drawn, petrified his

assailant and the Assembly by absolutely ignoring the attack.

In the first Reform Parliament the Quaker, Pease, as has been seen, was legislatively allowed to take his seat by affirmation instead of by oath. During the opening decade of the Commons' settlement in their present Chamber, two further changes in the personal composition of the House received statutory sanction; under Disraeli's leadership, the property qualification was abolished in May, 1858; in July a notable representative of a hitherto excluded class took his place. On July 31st, 1858, about two days from the Royal assent to the Jewish Relief Bill, to the surprise of all, save the few who were in the secret, entered Baron Lionel Rothschild, to take his seat as member for the City; his introducers were, on one side, Lord John Russell, on the other, John Abel Smith; according to pre-arranged form, on presenting himself at the table the baron refused the proffered oath, and was ordered to withdraw below the Bar; Russell then brought forward two resolutions, the point of which was, that hereafter Jews could swear allegiance, omitting the words "on the true faith of a Christian"; resistance to the proposal was led by a typical Tory Protestant squire, Charles Newdegate, of Warwickshire, and the literary lawyer, who wrote *Ten Thousand a Year*, a clever but windy egotist, who sat for Midhurst, Samuel Warren. The question, which had been open for eight years, was settled. Baron Lionel, by sixty-nine to thirty-seven, amid loud cheers, again walked up to the table, was sworn on the Old Testament, and took his seat; Alderman Salomons, member for Greenwich since 1857, but sitting below the Bar, only heard of what had happened on alighting at Charing Cross Station from Tonbridge; he paid a hansom cabman double his fare to drive to the House, but arrived just five minutes after the sitting was over. Since then, if

votes could be weighed instead of being counted, the Semitic element would be found to have become the predominant one at St. Stephen's.* The part taken by the writer of *A Late Physician's Diary* in this incident suggests another literary member, Warren's contemporary, as well as his personal opposite in all respects; A. W. Kinglake was too fastidiously sensitive to push his way in politics or in anything else; his social acquaintance and knowledge of the world at home and abroad placed him behind the scenes in foreign and domestic politics, and made him one among the real educators of the House in his day; Sir Robert Peel the second, with a presence as commandingly handsome as that of his father, combined a voice, called by Mr. Gladstone the most magnificent organ in the House; he was seated next to Kinglake while that student of affairs delivered an ingenious, instructive, but inaudible essay on the French annexation of Nice and Savoy, not noticed in the Press because no word of it reached the reporters; "Here are my notes; take them, Peel, for what they are worth." Sir Robert, whose magnificent air had a good deal about it of the master of the ring at a circus, assimilated the contents of the paper; a night or two later, when the same subject again came up, he made the speech of the debate by putting, in the clear, resonant tones, which everyone could hear, the diplomatic law that Kinglake had whispered as if the one thing to be avoided was to be understood; it was Kinglake's personal friend, by descent a Jew, a personage at St. Stephen's long before the Relief Bill had been dreamt of, who played a part, which St. Stephen's had never wanted some one to fill before, as well as after, Marten was the "droll of the House" in the

* Gladstone had, throughout this episode, cordially co-operated with Disraeli for Jewish relief; the personal position of these two men was much the same; both belonged to the upper middle class, both inherited competent patrimonies, each married an heiress. The talk of Disraeli's early poverty and dependence on Jew help is pure fiction; of such help he got so little that he humorously said, "We shall be forced to have a razzia against these Oriental millionaires."

Long Parliament. The most common memory surviving to-day of Ralph Bernal Osborne is that of a solitary diner at the Reform Club in the seventies of the nineteenth century, all of whose convives had dropped off, or a superannuated and sharp-tongued Yorick, who passed his life between Strawberry Hill in Lady Waldegrave's days, Holland House while it yet remained the social centre, and the fashionable houses in Belgravia and Mayfair, where he was always welcome; in his day the Bernal Osborne of the House was better than the Bernal Osborne at the private dinner-table, even at his best, and had a power of reviving a somnolent and rallying a dispersing Assembly unsurpassed by the leaders on either side; Palmerston alone was his match—witness that statesman's assurance, in reply to an apologetic message after a sharp attack, sent by Osborne—"Tell him I am not in the least offended, more particularly as I think I had the best of it"; on all such occasions Palmerston indeed showed himself unapproachable; in his hustings encounters with Rowcliffe, the Tiverton butcher, he displayed even a more telling tact than in the House, and a knowledge of English character, more inspiring than rung out in the speech on the Don Pacifico question (June 1850); "from the dusk of one day to the dawn of another," Palmerston in this speech secured himself against those of his own party who, like Gladstone, disapproved of coercing Greece.

Amid the rise and fall of these and many other parliamentary reputations, the composition of the House had yet to be finally fixed; Lord John Russell's repeated declarations of the Act of 1832 as marking the final point in democratic progress, and his entreaties to more advanced reformers to "rest and be thankful," had earned him the title of "Finality John," but had not laid the agitation for further enfranchisement; before the Commons had completed their tenth year in their new abode, there had been two separate movements

for supplementing the Grey Act by a more liberal bestowal of the suffrage; the latest, Russell's proposal, reducing the county franchise to £10, the borough to £6, had been withdrawn. On March 17th, 1866, Gladstone, as leader of the House, rose to explain the Russell Cabinet's measure; it was a masterpiece of lucid exposition, but not one of the speaker's greatest efforts, except, perhaps, in parts of its peroration; some sign of the change undergone by Conservatives on the subject since Peel's day was given by the member for Thetford, Harvey, rising to support the Bill; the leader was followed on his own side by a member whose clear-cut sentences divided, with the statuesque immobility of his countenance and the most noticeable imperfection of his sight, the attention of the House; Bright spoke during the dinner hour; the great event afterwards was the maiden utterance of the first blind member ever returned in the House, Henry Fawcett; completely triumphing over a little coterie—Lowe, Horseman, Disraeli's "superior person," and one or two more conspiring to put him down—the new member achieved a success and founded a reputation; Bright's sarcasm and invective never told more brilliantly than when levelled against this cabal; on the other side, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton followed with a clever, neat, and comparatively terse little essay, whose sentences had the sparkle of glass cut to look like diamonds, winding up with the moral that democracy, as portended by the Russell-Gladstone proposals, can only suit nations yet in their youth. The poet and novelist was followed by the philosopher. Amid the still ringing cheers, aroused by Bulwer, arose the tall, angular, ascetic figure of John Stuart Mill; on his first effort, a little time before he had been caricaturistically snubbed by Robert Lowe as too clever by half for the Assembly; Young England, now grown elderly and out of its white waistcoat in the person of the Buckhurst of *Coningsby*, the Bailie Coch-

rane of real life, as spokesman of the squires, whose boast it always was to vote against "that d——d intellect"; Mill has been called a parliamentary failure; party applause or interested cheers he never won, but, notably during a debate on capital punishment, he helped the House by the brushing away of fallacies and the carrying of conviction by intellectual argument to the goal pointed by right reason.

The future Lord Salisbury, as Lord Robert Cecil, on April 7th, 1854, had delivered, in the discussion of the Russell University Reform Bill, a maiden speech, eliciting high praise from Mr. Gladstone; the abolition of the paper duty in 1860 had brought him into sharp collision with his earlier admirer. The Peers threw out the specific Bill repealing the duty; it was afterwards incorporated in the Budget and carried; Lord Robert Cecil, in the course of a debate, denounced these tactics as more worthy of an attorney than of a statesman; called upon to withdraw or modify the charge, Lord Robert admitted it to have involved a great injustice to the attorney. In the Reform discussions of May, 1866, the then Lord Cranborne, as by his brother's death he had become, found an opening for one of the sharp extempore retorts, wherein, rather than in set orations, he always shone by burlesquing Gladstone's remark to the effect that he had burned his bridges behind him; instead of these words, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was taunted with having said, by a slip of the tongue, that he had "burned his breeches behind him"; the joke suited the Assembly in the small hours; before the laughter had subsided, in a House, beginning to be divided between yawners and sleepers, Disraeli was on his legs; the Conservatives wanted the sport, whose showing, as Bolingbroke more than a century and a half earlier had said, always delighted the House; Bright and Russell were first singled out for facetious invective in the style of the old Runnymede letters. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was next con-

victed of inconsistency by some extracts, verbally quoted, from an anti-Reform speech, delivered by him in the Oxford Union thirty-six years before.

The remaining history of the abortive Russell-Gladstone proposals need not be retold in detail here; the success, by three hundred and fifteen to three hundred and four, June, 1866, of the Dunkellin amendment, substituting rating for rental, brought in the Derby-Disraeli Government, and with it Household Franchise. The defeat of the late Ministry's Bill had been chiefly due to a handful of Liberal malcontents, whose personal presence and debating cleverness recalled the best days of the eighteenth century House of Commons; Robert Lowe's classical denunciations of democracy scarcely fell short of literary perfection; the comparison of the House taking its character from the constituencies to the polypus, which borrows its hues from the rock; the warning that to lower the constituencies was to degrade the representatives, and, therefore, the Assembly itself—all this was a piece of intellectual delight to the Chamber; the Trojan horse was suspected of having been introduced before; but then before Peel, in reference to O'Connell's agitation, had said: "Repeal the Union, restore the Heptarchy," Canning had used the same phrase to demonstrate the impossibility of parliamentary reform. Not only Lowe's oratory, but his very countenance, approached with extraordinary closeness to a classical model; those of his hearers who had not forgotten their Greek and Latin, found themselves unconsciously translating into the phrase, now of Cicero, now of Tacitus, again of Demosthenes, the periods of the denunciator of democracy, of all its persons and works.* After Lowe, as the oracle and intellect of the Adullamites, came Lord Elcho, whose skill in

* At a later stage, Disraeli happily characterised Lowe's jeremiads at this period by describing him as vituperative of the insects of Abyssinia, as if they had been British working-men.

debate was set off to advantage by his handsome face, lofty manner, and fine elocution; Edward Horseman, tall, erect, with a certain majesty of mein, often to appearance overpowered by the force of his convictions, would have been more of a force in the House could he have created a deeper impression of sincerity, and have reproduced less of the pulpit in his manner; the measure of Horseman's failure was the ease with which another private member, by no means of the first class, Hussey Vivian, used, in the phrase of the day, to take up the member for Liskeard's bag of theories, shake it out, and then fill it with facts.

The clever malcontents, now named, preferred independence and self-assertion to responsibility and power; they would not join the Administration formed in June, 1866, by Lord Derby, with Disraeli as Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House. The summer was marked by reform demonstrations in London and throughout the country; these agitations culminated in the wave of excitement that brought Edmund Beales, M.A., to the leadership of the mob, swept down Hyde Park railings, and carried an enthusiastic crowd into the enclosure as far as the point since marked by the Reformers' Tree; the new Conservatism was as indisposed and impotent of itself to introduce the democratic suffrage now imminent, as, in 1832, the old Whigs had showed themselves indifferent to the creation of a £10 franchise. The Radical organization that supplied the motive power in 1832 once more gave the legislative initiative in 1867; Disraeli and his chief were once more pledged to deal with the Reform question, which they had bungled in 1859. By that earlier experience they were now to show they had profited; other inspiration had been at their disposal; so recently as 1860 there passed away one among the most notable men of his time, as well as one of the most effective of popular speakers in the House, a singularly shrewd expert

in the politics of his time; the white waistcoat, the plaid cravat under the blue dress-coat with the metal buttons, of Henry Drummond is to-day in many memories associated with the robust outspokenness of Patrick Boyle Smollett, the facetious satire of Bernal Osborne, the sarcastic wisdom of the historian, John Warner Henley, even with the shrewd insight into character of Disraeli himself; Drummond, in 1852, and for some years afterwards, was Disraeli's habitual counsellor in political matters. The germs of the Conservative measure of 1867 are to be found in a letter from Drummond to Disraeli, enclosing a sketch of a Reform Bill, which the sender, for his own amusement, had caused "a very able lawyer to draw up."* That enclosure may be described as the original of the scheme about to be unfolded at St. Stephen's; the speech from the Throne, opening the session of 1867, contained the promise of the Reform Bill; the practical fulfilment was soon forthcoming in Disraeli's explanation that ministers were resolved that reform should no longer be the stalking horse of parties, intended to take the House into their confidence on the subject, and to deal with the subject by a series of resolutions as preliminary to a Bill. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech on February 25th, 1867, was not in his best manner; the need of being wary caused him to be wearisome; as Admiral Edmonstone said, after he sat down, Disraeli could not get on because he was all the while in shoal water; when the resolutions were brought in they were found to include a £6 franchise in boroughs, £20 in counties, four fancy franchises—based on education, on the possession of £50 in the public funds, or £30 in the Savings Bank; how the resolutions were replaced by substantive Bill, how one safeguard after another was dropped till the measure had become one of household

* The full text of the letter is given in the *Quarterly Review*, October, 1895. "Rival Leaders and Party Legacies," p. 363.

suffrage pure and simple, how the Bill was enlarged by Gladstone's lodger franchise amendment, how proposals of proportional representation and of women's enfranchisement were made sometimes only to be withdrawn; how by the end of July, 1868, had been completed the last detail for the establishment of the new democratic polity; how, on July 31st, 1868, the last House, elected under the 1832 Reform Act, came to an end—these things have their place in the general story of the country and the age.

The result of the General Elections was fatal to the authors of the measure which caused them; with a majority of three hundred and ninety-three, as against two hundred and sixty-five, Gladstone, for the first time now Prime Minister, introduced his Irish Church proposals. To-day, on great occasions, the recipients of members' orders to the House are only admitted after success in a ballot for places; in 1869 that preliminary ordeal was unknown; only those visitors who came early had a chance of entering; on the present occasion, two hours before the minister rose, there had ceased to be standing room in St. Stephen's Hall; the Royal personages and foreign princes who waited their chance outside were graciously allowed by the Speaker to mount to the Members' Gallery; what chiefly struck the minister's hearers was the freedom from the orator's besetting faults shown by the whole of this amazing effort; the diffuseness which often weakened his effect, if they did not obscure his meaning, was absent now; no superfluous or misplaced word could be pointed to in the mighty succession of sentences, expository of his plan; the language had the simplicity and clearness of Bright rather than of Gladstone. As he sat down, collectively and individually the House felt that, whether in the way of explanation, confirmation, or correction, no other word could be said; its mind for the moment was overcharged; a critic on the opposite side whispered to his neighbour that

nothing remained but to move the adjournment. Contrast with this grave and sustained intellectual effort Mr. Gladstone's playful but consummate handling, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, thirteen years later, July 5th, 1881, of the then Lord Sandon's complaint that a certain financial document had been published in French, not English, and that the leader of the House had not answered a question put to him on the previous day; Gladstone, as his custom often was, wearing a breezy lavender-hued frockcoat, white waistcoat, and many-coloured tie, in spirits more fresh and of manner more debonair and juvenile than could even be looked for in the sprightliest of septuagenarians, had just entered the House, apparently in quest of amusement; "I said nothing," he observed, with charming naiveté, "because I knew nothing"; this, of course, put the House in laughing good humour; so long as he had to remain on his legs the Premier simply romped with it in a series of wary gambols; it was this versatile combination of various excellencies—Pitt's faculty of lucid, majestic exposition, based on an easy mastery of all State business, the volatility of Palmerston or of Disraeli himself, the earnest Anglo-Saxon simplicity of Bright, varied, when it suited his purpose, by digressions recalling the schoolmen, which gave Gladstone his unique parliamentary rank.

In 1880 began the movement which ended by opening the door of the House so widely as, by affirmation instead of oath, to admit to their seats agnostics or religious unbelievers of any kind, as well as Quakers and Jews. While the Bradlaugh agitation was still in progress was accomplished also the final change of the nineteenth century in the composition of the Assembly; since 1870 much had been accomplished in the direction of Robert Lowe's famous palliative to democracy; "our masters," in country as well as town, had been educated; the House had long witnessed periodical motions for replacing the £12 suffrage of 1868 by Household franchise in

agricultural districts. As regards the differences between the two Houses, which marked the progress of the County franchise and the Redistribution Bills of 1884-5, it is enough here to note that the controversy was closed by the mediation of a Peer, whose title is full of interesting parliamentary associations; Pulteney, who led the Tory Opposition to Walpole at a time when, but for himself, Toryism existed only in the writings of Bolingbroke and Swift, had transmitted to his posterity the earldom of Bath; the nobleman, wearing that style in 1884, prevailed on Mr. Gladstone to meet the Conservative view, and so to ensure the universal enfranchisement of the rural tillers of the soil.* Meanwhile Gladstone had fulfilled part of Palmerston's well-known prediction concerning him, in preparing the ruin of his party by his acceptance of Home Rule; at the close of 1885 were held the General Elections, resulting in a Liberal majority of three hundred and thirty-five against two hundred and forty-nine Conservatives; Lord Salisbury, however, met Parliament as usual; here, at least in the Lower House, great changes had been accomplished; Disraeli's successor in the popular Chamber had been not, as was hoped, Gathorne Hardy, a rattling speaker on all subjects, a first-class debater, of happy resourcefulness and ready courage, but a blameless country gentleman and conscientious official, depicted by Trollope in *The Three Clerks* as Sir Warwick Westend; this was Sir Stafford Northcote, whose languid tactics in Opposition brought to the front the little coterie known as the Fourth Party, not because of their number, but because the Irish members then colloquially constituted a third party. The leader of this group, Lord Randolph Churchill, to readiness in debate and

* An exact account, committed to paper at the time from data, never likely to be published, of these negotiations, will be found in the closing chapter of a little book by the present writer—*Platform, Press, Politics, and Play*. (Arrowsmith, Bristol, 1895.)



quickness in getting up subjects, added real qualities for political captaincy; he had powerfully impressed himself on the mind and imagination of the country; his Tory democratic propaganda formed partly an heritage from Disraeli and was partly inspired by the genius of Joseph Chamberlain; that political force first asserted itself at St. Stephen's February 17th, 1877, in a maiden speech on the Prisons Bill; subsequently, still during the interval of Gladstone's retirement after the Liberal defeat of 1874, Mr. Chamberlain, in a debate that had brought up the question of Army flogging, proclaimed his independence by calling Lord Hartington "the late leader of the Liberal party." When the Cabinet of 1880 was formed, as the most representative Radical at St. Stephen's, and by the Caucus agency the controller of the whole Radical organization, Mr. Chamberlain, could not be excluded; from and since the days of Alderman Sawbridge, and, before him, Walpole's City opponent, Barnard, men who have achieved notoriety in municipal life have become personages in the Parliament of the Empire; Mr. Chamberlain differs from these in that, when he first took his seat at St. Stephen's, a member of very juvenile appearance, resembling that of a young University don, he had raised the municipal politics of his town to the level of party statesmanship; his place, however, was but accidentally among those on whose side of the House he first sat; his sense of the imperial mission of his race from the first was at least as strong as his concern for civil and religious liberty in their various phases; the power of attracting followers and the capacity to create enemies are correlative terms; Lord Randolph Churchill was stimulated to reproduce in his own way the former of these attributes, which he admired in the Birmingham member; an adherent of Mr. Chamberlain, of a pattern hitherto little known at St. Stephen's, Mr. Jesse Collings, by his "three acres and a cow" amendment, made

his personal chief once more a Cabinet Minister in Gladstone's first Home Rule Administration.

Lord Hartington, as leader of the House, after Gladstone's withdrawal in 1874, had shown the traditional qualities of his family—fidelity to Whig ideas in the face of social and personal temptations to renounce them, virile common sense, a sturdy determination to tolerate no avoidable waste of public time; his career in the Commons may be said to have closed with his refusal to join his old chief in 1886 after his conversion to Home Rule; Mr. Chamberlain and Sir G. O. Trevelyan only entered the Cabinet to leave it almost immediately before, on April 8th, 1886, the Liberal Premier signalised his entrance upon the last stage of his career, by explaining in a speech of three hours and a half his project of Irish autonomy; during the period then commencing, the chief men among the Commoners exercised their power less directly in the House than in their efforts to organize parties anew in the country. The Home Rule Bill had no sooner been thrown out, by three hundred and forty-one to three hundred and eleven, than Lord Salisbury became the head of what was, in effect, a coalition Government; if the ministers were for the most part titularly Conservative, their supporters, the enemies of Home Rule, had belonged equally to both parties; Lord Hartington was in effect Lord Salisbury's colleague in the Premiership; Randolph Churchill, in a speech at Manchester, March 3rd, 1886, had been the first and the only deviser of the new party appellation, Unionist; his whole career had been animated by one idea, consistently pursued, that of destroying the whole party dualism, and replacing it by the amalgamation which, from that day to this, has managed the representative Chamber by the joint rule of a former political friend of Churchill, and by the distinguished man whose power, originating in the Midlands, is felt in the twentieth century throughout, not only the kingdom, but the

Empire. The most experienced of critics in such a manner, Gladstone himself, declared the House of 1893, which finally negatived his Home Rule proposals, to have been richer in ability than any other wherein he had sat. Later Reform Bills have familiarised St. Stephen's with a class of member more distinctly novel than appeared during the earlier portion of the nineteenth century. The Labour representatives, by their exemplary course and bearing, have disarmed frightened hostility, proved accessions to the debating and deliberative strength of the Assembly; in the case of Mr. Burt and Mr. Broadhurst, they have proved successful administrators. From the days of Speaker Mare, of John of Gaunt, to those of the Stuarts first and the early Hanoverians afterwards, the grievance of the House was its arbitrary treatment by the Crown; that in the twentieth century is succeeded by the private member's complaint of the despotic encroachment upon his rights by the Cabinet; the Chamber itself will continue its functions in the presence of the new enemy as effectively as it contrived to do against the old.

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